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Hidden costs of iOS: Apple users paying more on everyday apps

AMINA AFAQ
BENGALURU, 7 NOV

The biggest struggle in purchasing an Apple device is paying a bomb for it. But, that is just the beginning of a journey of sky-high expenses. Using common apps like Uber, Ola, MakeMyTrip, and Yatra can be more expensive on iOS than on Android, leading Apple users to pay extra for everyday services.

Let's consider an instance while hailing a ride on Uber. When Salar News booked a 5-kilometre ride in Bengaluru, the fare for an Uber Auto was Rs 154 on an iPhone, compared to just Rs 121 on an Android device for the same trip. Similarly, flight and hotel bookings on apps such as MakeMyTrip and Yatra can cost at least 10 per cent more on iOS than on Android.

Many Apple users say the company is robbing its customers. "It is unethical," Alia (name changed), a psychologist and iOS user from Bengaluru, told Salar News. "Maybe this is a class thing because iPhones are supposed to be for richer or cooler people. The brand does not justify the higher price."

SALAR EXCLUSIVE

Apple Tax

So, what's driving this discrepancy? Industry experts point to "Apple Tax" — a 30 per cent commission fee that Apple charges developers for using App Store and in-app payment system. While this tax applies to many transactions on iOS apps on gaming, gambling and OTT platforms, some categories, such as food, physical goods and flight tickets, are reportedly exempted. Apple should not impose higher charges on services such as Uber or Ola either. For subscriptions such as Netflix and YouTube Premium, Apple's commission is unavoidable, leading apps to pass those costs onto consumers.

Subscriptions face a 30 per cent commission fee in the first year, then it is reduced to 15 per cent each year after. Google, by contrast, charges third-party subscription apps a flat 15 per cent commission. Amal Sony, a Pennsylvania-based app developer, said Apple charges developers an annual fee of $99 (Rs 8,350), apart from the commission, for the App Store while Play Store takes $25 (Rs 2,100) for the same. The $99 cost plays a role in the pricing of small developers, he said. Although Apple's guidelines specify that apps should not exploit users, the company has yet to address or take action against apps that appear to be inflating costs on iOS devices. The apps in question and Apple refused to comment on the inflated costs.

—Salar News

>>>More on Page 5

JET AIRWAYS NO MORE; SC ORDERS LIQUIDATION

SC says bidder failed to implement bankruptcy resolution plan

NEW DELHI, 7 NOV

In a major development in the Jet Airways insolvency saga, the Supreme Court on Thursday ordered the grounded airline's liquidation, forfeiture of Rs 200 crore infused by successful bidder Jalan Kalrock Consortium (JKC) and permitted the lenders led by SBI to encash Rs 150 crore performance bank guarantee.

Invoking its extraordinary powers under Article 142 of the Constitution, a bench comprising Chief Justice DY Chandrachud and Justices J B Pardiwala and Manoj Misra put the curtains down on the insolvency proceedings of the

airlines by setting aside the order of the National Company Law Appellate Tribunal (NCLAT). Pronouncing judgement for the bench, Justice Pardiwala allowed the plea of SBI and other creditors against the NCLAT decision that upheld the resolution plan of Jet Airways in favour of JKC. The apex court allowed the appeals of the lenders and set aside the NCLAT order. NCLAT on 12 March upheld the resolution plan of the grounded air carrier and approved the transfer of its ownership to JKC. The SBI, Punjab National Bank and JC Flowers Asset Reconstruction Private Limited challenged the NCLAT verdict. The airline had also said it was looking to re-launch operations from 2024. *—PTI*

>>>More on Page 4

SC allows NCRB to collect caste data in prisons

The Supreme Court said its direction to delete the "caste" column apart from any caste reference in undertrials or convicts' registers in jails will not impede the collection of data by National Crime Records Bureau. Bench of CJI DY Chandrachud Justices JB Pardiwala and Manoj Misra made the clarifications.

SECURITY CONCERNS

Counter-terrorism policy soon: HM

NEW DELHI, 7 NOV

The government will soon bring a national counter-terrorism policy and strategy to fight terrorists, terrorists and their ecosystem, Union Home Minister Amit Shah said on Thursday.

Addressing an anti-terrorism conference here, Shah also said that while law and order is a state subject and states have the geographical boundaries and constitutional limitations, terrorism doesn't and hence all security agencies -- central and states -- must work in close coordination, chalk out joint strategies and share intelligence.

He said the government has come up with a vision on model anti-terrorism squad (ATS) and model special task force (STF) for the states and Union territories, which, if adopted, will work as a common structure and platform to deal with the menace of terrorism. *—PTI*

Amit Shah *PHOTO: PTI*

No compromise in sexual harassment cases: Apex Court

NEW DELHI, 7 NOV

The Supreme Court on Thursday said a sexual harassment case cannot be closed after a compromise is reached between the rival parties as such offences have serious impact on the society.The observation came while setting aside an order of the Rajasthan High Court which had quashed the FIR against a teacher who was accused of sexually molesting a 16-year-old girl at school in Rajasthan's Sawai Madhopur district.

A bench of justices CT Ravikumar and Sanjay Kumar said the high court has misapplied the law laid down to quash the subject FIR and all further proceedings. *—PTI*

TERRORIST KILLED IN J&K ENCOUNTER

SRINAGAR, 7 NOV

A terrorist was killed in an encounter with security forces in Jammu and Kashmir's Kupwara district, officials said on Thursday.

The encounter began on Wednesday after security forces launched a cordon and search operation in Margi area of Lolab in the north Kashmir district based on specific intelligence inputs about the presence of terrorists, they said. *—PTI*

PHOTO: X

Zika case detected in Gujarat, patient discharged

AHMEDABAD, 7 NOV

A 70-year-old man from Gandhinagar city contracted Zika virus infection following which he was treated in a hospital and discharged, officials said on Thursday. While the report confirming that the man was infected with the Zika virus came four days ago, he was sent home from the hospital a week ago after full recovery, said the Gujarat Health Department in a statement. Zika virus is transmitted primarily by Aedes mosquitoes. The symptoms include rash, fever, conjunctivitis, muscle and joint pain. Zika infection during pregnancy can cause infants to be born with microcephaly and other congenital malformations as well as preterm birth and miscarriage. On 24 October, the septuagenarian was admitted to a hospital in Gandhinagar after he had a cold, fever and joint pain. Following treatment, the patient recovered and was discharged from the hospital about a week ago, said the statement, adding that the man had not travelled abroad in recent times. *—PTI*

6 arrested for molesting woman in Chikkaballapur

CHIKKABALLPUR, 7 NOV

The Dibburahalli police in Sidlagatta taluk, Chikkaballapur, have arrested six individuals, including a woman and a juvenile, for allegedly kidnapping, disrobing, and molesting a 34-year-old yoga teacher. The incident occurred on 23 October. The victim, Archana, had a friendship with her husband's friend, Santosh Kumar, which led Santosh's wife, Bindu, to become suspicious about their relationship. Bindu hired a private investigator, Satish Reddy from Andhra Pradesh, to look into the matter. Satish soon joined Archana's yoga classes, and on 23 October, he persuaded her to accompany him to visit a rifle training camp. However, he and others molested her near a forested area in Dibburahalli in Sidlagatta. Believing her to be dead, they dug a pit, placed her in it, covered it with mud and shrubs, and fled. ***—Salar News***

SC revives DRI notices against Vedanta, 12 others

NEW DELHI, 7 NOV

In a big victory for the Union Finance Ministry, the Supreme Court on Thursday has potentially revived Directorate of Revenue Intelligence (DRI) notices valued between Rs 20,000 crore and Rs 23,000 crore. These notices were issued to 13 companies, including Vedanta, Vodafone Idea, Adani Enterprises, and others, for the recovery of customs dues.

The top court overturned its 2021 ruling, which had stripped DRI officers of their authority to issue such notices.

The court declared the previous decision "patently erroneous" and confirmed that DRI officers were indeed designated as proper officers by the Centre under the Customs Act, 1962. This new judgment could reactivate DRI notices amounting to 20,000 crore to 23,000 crore in over 800 cases, with this latest decision covering 108 cases. Other companies affected include TVS Motor Company, Samsung India, Godrej and Boyce Manufacturing, BSNL, Daikin, Sony India, Canon, Nikon India, Sennheiser, and Yakult Danone.

Following the 2021 ruling, the Centre had filed a review petition and the apex court heard the review and reserved its judgment in September 2024 on whether the powers under the Customs Act, 1962 can be conferred upon the Directorate of Revenue Intelligence.

—Agencies

CANADA ROW

Canada blocks Aus media for broadcasting EAM's remarks

NEW DELHI, 7 NOV

India on Thursday said Canada blocked an Australian media outlet hours after it broadcast the press conference of External Affairs Minister (EAM) S Jaishankar and his Australian counterpart Penny Wong.

External Affairs Ministry spokesman Randhir Jaiswal said the Canadian action of blocking the social media handles and certain pages of Australia Today smacked of hypocrisy towards freedom of speech.

"We understand that the social media handles, pages of this particular outlet, which are important diaspora outlets, have been blocked and are not available for viewers in Canada," Jaiswal said in response to a question at the weekly media briefing. He said the second thing he highlighted was surveillance of Indian diplomats happening in Canada. "The third thing which he highlighted was the political space which has been given in Canada to anti-India elements. So you can draw your conclusions from that, why the Australia Today channel was blocked by Canada," Jaiswal said. *—PTI*

>>>More on Page 3

Priest suspended in temple row

Ottawa, 7 Nov

The priest of a Hindu temple in the Canadian city of Brampton has been suspended for spreading "violent rhetoric" during recent clashes between protesters carrying Khalistani flags and the people present there.

PHOTO: PTI

FARMERS FACE ₹30K FINE FOR STUBBLE BURNING

NEW DELHI, 7 NOV

The Centre has doubled the fine for farmers burning crop residue in view of the deteriorating air quality in the Delhi-NCR region, the penalty going up to Rs 30,000 for those with more than five acres of farmland.

According to the notification, which was published on Wednesday and comes following the Supreme Court's tough stance on the issue, farmers with less than two acres of land will now have to pay environmental compensation of Rs 5,000, up from Rs 2,500. And those with land between two and five acres will be fined Rs 10,000 instead of Rs 5,000.

Unfavourable meteorological conditions combined with vehicular emissions, paddy-straw burning, firecrackers, and other local pollution sources contribute to hazardous air quality levels in Delhi-NCR during late autumn and winters.

Meanwhile, farmer bodies in Punjab on Thursday strongly condemned the Centre's move of raising fines for stubble burning and asked why the government was not providing crop residue management machinery to them to check farm fires. *—PTI*

BREAKING RECORDS

2024 is the warmest year: Report

NEW DELHI, 7 NOV

It is almost certain that 2024 will be the warmest year on record and the first with an average temperature at least 1.5 degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels, following the second-warmest October in history, European climate change agency Copernicus said on Thursday.

The announcement comes ahead of the UN climate conference, which begins on 11 November in Baku, Azerbaijan. At the summit, countries are expected to agree on new climate finance

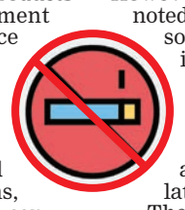
Samantha Burgess, Deputy Director of the Copernicus Climate Change Service (C3S), said: "After 10 months of 2024 it is now virtually certain that 2024 will be the warmest year on record and the first year of more than 1.5 degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels. This marks a new milestone in global temperature records and should serve as a catalyst to raise ambition for the upcoming climate change conference, COP29."

At the 2015 UN climate talks in Paris, world leaders committed to limiting the global average temperature rise to 1.5 degrees Celsius above the pre-industrial period to avoid the worst impacts of climate change. However, a permanent breach of the 1.5-degree Celsius limit specified in the Paris Agreement refers to long-term warming over a 20 or 30-year period. *—PTI*

State bans smoking, tobacco in govt offices

BENGALURU, 7 NOV

State government on Thursday issued an order banning smoking and the consumption of tobacco products within the government offices and on office premises.



Emphasising the severe health risks associated with tobacco use, the Department of Personnel and Administrative Reforms, said that it has severe consequences such as cancer, cardiovascular diseases, diabetes, chronic lung disease, stroke, infertility, blindness, tuberculosis (TB), and oral health issues.

Rule-31 of the Karnataka State Civil Service (Conduct) Rules, 2021, already restricts the use of alcohol and other intoxicants in public spaces. However, the department noted repeated violations by some officials, prompting this reinforced directive.

The order also warned that strict action will be taken against those found violating the ban.

The State government recently had introduced the Cigarettes and Other Tobacco Products Bill, 2024, aiming to strengthen tobacco sales regulations across the state.

—Salar News

'Intoxicated' doc, male nurse treat woman patient

BENGALURU, 7 NOV

Kumaraswamy Layout police registered a Non-Cognizable Report (NCR) against a doctor and a male nurse of a private hospital in City for allegedly treating a patient in an inebriated state.As per the complaint, a 20-year-old woman with symptoms of fever and fatigue was admitted into the hospital on 3 November. The two accused, identified as Dr Pradeep and nurse Mahendra, attended her despite being under the influence of alcohol. The family of the victim claimed that the duo administered intravenous (IV) drips four to five times the required quantity, which led to her experiencing significant distress. The family also claimed that they had confronted the medical staff regarding this, but no action was taken. Following the directions of Deputy Commissioner of Police, Bengaluru South, Sarah Fathima, police have launched an investigation into the incident. "A report has been sought about the treatment given to the victim. Further action will be taken based on the report," a senior official from KS Layout police station, told Salar News.
—Salar News

250 female cops undergo screening for cancer

BENGALURU, 7 NOV

In a step towards ensuring the health and wellness of its workforce, Bengaluru Traffic Police (BTP) in coordination with Rotary and Innerwheel Club held a cancer-screening camp for its women officials at Traffic Management Centre (TMC) in the City on Thursday. More than 250 female police officers were screened for the most common women-related cancers, Joint Commissioner of Police, Traffic, MN Anucheth told Salar News. The objective of the camp is to promote early detection and prevention of cancers affecting women, he said. "Police personnel have hectic schedules and need to work tirelessly for the welfare of society and they often tend to neglect their health while taking care of others. Such camps serve us with the opportunity to help these strong women," he said—*Salar News*

Utilise Livelihood Mission's benefits: ZP CEO to women

MYSURU, 7 NOV

Zilla Panchayat CEO KM Gayathri urged women self-help groups (SHGs) in villages to use benefits from the National Rural Livelihood Mission (NRLM). Speaking at a review meeting in Periyapatna taluk panchayat, she highlighted that SHGs can access interest-free loans up to Rs 20 lakh for self-employment initiatives like making home products. Gayathri emphasised the need for panchayat officials to provide marketing support for these products and to organise monthly fairs at gram panchayat levels. She praised the Bettadapur Gram Panchayat SHGs for producing cloth bags under the NRLM scheme and facilitating their marketing. Noting the high demand for items like millets, pickles, and other local products, she urged further promotion of these by SHGs and panchayats. Additionally, Gayathri suggested using Pashu Sakhis to support marketing efforts. She also reviewed the progress of Periyapatna taluk in tax collection, MGNREGA implementation, drinking water supply, and waste management. Key officials, including planning officer Prabhuswamy, were present. *—Salar News*

Waqf row: JPC Chief gets 500 petitions from farmers

Jagdambika Pal says he would place concerns before JPC

HUBBALLI/ VIJAYAPURA, 7 NOV

More than 500 petitions were received by Chairman of Joint Committee of Parliament on Waqf (Amendment) Bill, Jagdambika Pal, on Thursday from farmers in Karnataka's northern districts, who alleged that their lands were marked as Waqf properties, according to Bengaluru South BJP MP Tejasvi Surya's office.

Pal, along with Surya, also a JCP member, visited Hubballi, Vijayapura and Belagavi, during which he met farmers and members of organisations who complained that their lands were being claimed by State Waqf Board. The 500 petitions were from farmers across Vijayapura, Bidar, Kalaburagi, Hubballi, Bagalkote and Belgavi, Surya's office said.

Noting that he had come to the State on a "fact-finding" mission and to meet those aggrieved, Pal said farmers and organisations have handed over to him documents and memorandums. Pal said he assured them that their issues would be discussed in the JPC and incorporated into the report.

"Maybe State government has given directions to Revenue Department officials not to evict the farmers, but will the issue be resolved? There has been tampering of records, mutations; Waqf has ensured changes in the documents. What is the State government doing on this and who is responsible for this?" he asked.

"Why notices are being given to farmers who have been cultivating the land since 1920 and 1930, even before the law was enacted?" he asked, while pointing out that farmers have claimed that apart from serving notices, changes have been made in the RTC (Record of Rights, Tenancy and Crops), pahani and mutation registers.

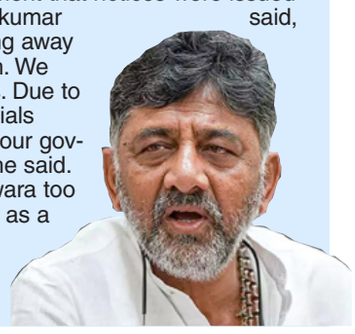
Noting that the Karnataka Waqf board has laid claim to at least 53 historic Archaeological Survey of India protected monuments across the state, Pal asked, "How is it a Waqf property?"

There were allegations by a section of farmers from Vijayapura district that their lands were marked as Waqf properties. *—PTI*

Jagdambika Pal ***PHOTO: PTI***

JPC Chairman's visit is politically motivated with an eye on polls: DKS

Deputy Chief Minister DK Shivakumar on Thursday termed the visit of the Chairman of the Joint Committee of Parliament on Waqf (Amendment) Bill, Jagadambika Pal to the State as a tour of a "drama company" and "politically motivated", with an eye on the upcoming Assembly bypolls in the State and election in neighbouring Maharashtra. Charging the JPC Chairman with indulging in political propaganda, Shivakumar, who is also the State Congress President, said it is not a joint parliamentary committee that is visiting, as "only BJP members have come and are doing politics."It is a drama company. JPC means all the members will have to come, also governments and officials have to be informed. Only the chairman has come. He has come on party work along with another MP," Shivakumar said. He said: "Is Bommai (MP and former CM Basavaraj Bommai) a member of JPC or is V Somanna the member? Somanna is the Union minister, he cannot be part of the JPC. He (Chairman) has come taking applications and is doing political propaganda." Both Bommai and Somanna had met Pal earlier in the day.Claiming that it was during the Bommai-led BJP government that notices were issued and records amended, Shivakumar said, "There is no question of taking away farmers' land or evicting them. We (Cong govt) will save farmers. Due to technical reasons, some officials might have done something, our government will set them right," he said. Home Minister G Parameshwara too said, "It doesn't look like JPC as a committee is visiting, as the Chairman is visiting alone disregarding rules." *—PTI*



CITY CELEBRATES CHHATH PUJA

Devotees perform rituals at Ulsoor Lake during Chhath festival, in Bengaluru, on Thursday. Chhath Pooja is a four-day celebration in honour of the Sun ***PHOTOS: MOHAMMED ASAD***

MUDA CASE

Chief Minister Siddaramaiah appeared before the Lokayukta police in Mysuru on Wednesday ***PHOTO: PTI***

Lokayukta may again summon CM, says legal adviser

BENGALURU, 7 NOV

Chief Minister Siddaramaiah may be summoned again for questioning by the Lokayukta police in connection with the MUDA site allotment case, said his legal adviser AS Ponnanna on Thursday. This comes after Siddaramaiah appeared before the Lokayukta police in Mysuru on Wednesday, following a summons issued earlier. The questioning was led by Lokayukta Superintendent of Police TJ Udesh.

Ponnanna, who is also a Congress MLA, stated, "The Chief Minister has responded to all questions posed. If further investigation reveals new information, they may call him again. This is at the discretion of the investigating officer."

Under the provisions of Criminal Procedure Code (CrPC) 41A, Siddaramaiah's attendance was recorded, and the investigators informed him that he might be recalled if needed. Ponnanna emphasized that it is standard procedure for investigators to summon witnesses or accused multiple times during a probe.

The Chief Minister is accused number 1 in an FIR alleging illegalities in the allotment of 14 sites by the Mysuru Urban Development Authority (MUDA) to his wife, Parvathi BM. She, named as accused number 2, was questioned on 25 October. Other individuals, including Siddaramaiah's brother-in-law Mallikarjuna Swamy and Devaraju, are also listed in the case. Swamy and Devaraju have already deposed before the police and investigation is underway as there's a chance for further questioning. *—PTI*

CM's supporters take to the streets in Delhi

A group of writers and other supporters of Chief Minister Siddaramaiah protested in New Delhi on Thursday through the Karnataka State Backward Classes Forum, accusing BJP of misusing Central agencies in the MUDA scam. The demonstrators condemned the misuse of central agencies such as the ED, CBI, and IT departments, as well as gubernatorial positions, to destabilise the Congress government. The group of writers and CM supporters also criticised Union government's unfair practices in the allocation of grants, distribution of the State's tax share, and other injustices, despite Karnataka being the highest GST contributor in the country.In a memorandum submitted to President Draupadi Murmu, they appealed for intervention, and urged the Union government intervene in the misuse of central agencies. They also appealed to ensure fair treatment for the State in the allocation of grants and its share of taxes within the federal system.
—Salar News

I-T dept raids Truecaller offices

NEW DELHI, 7 NOV

The Income-Tax Department Thursday carried out searches at offices of global caller ID platform Truecaller on charges of tax evasion, official sources said. The Stockholm-headquartered company said it was cooperating with the investigators.

Tax officials said the searches were aimed to gather detailed information and check documents in connection with certain charges of tax evasion including those pertaining to transfer pricing (TP) issues. According to the company's website, Truecaller has offices in Bengaluru, Mumbai and Gurugram in India. The company said in a public statement that "On Thursday 7 November 2024, Truecaller's India offices were visited by Indian Tax officials." They are currently assisting the authorities to the full extent at our offices. This came without prior notice, and we are currently awaiting official confirmation and communication from the tax departments," it said.

This is not an uncommon practice and Truecaller will cooperate fully with the relevant authorities, the company said. With regards to taxation, the Swedish company added, as a publicly listed company, our practices are entirely transparent and that they would like to reiterate that it is not subject to any tax investigation in India outside the routine tax audits.

"Truecaller's group financial statements have always received an unqualified audit opinion, and we have always paid all taxes due in India and all regions where it operates," it said. Its website said Truecaller is "loved by around 425 million monthly active users around the world, who trust the apps to identify numbers and block spam". *—PTI*

Tax officials said the searches were aimed to gather information and check documents in connection with certain charges of tax evasion ***PHOTO: PTI***

- According to the company's website, Truecaller has offices in Bengaluru, Mumbai and Gurugram. The Stockholm-headquartered company said it was cooperating with the investigators of Income Tax Department

Cyber safety training for senior citizens to be held tomorrow

BENGALURU, 7 NOV

Bengaluru City police in collaboration with Nightingales Medical Trust is set to organise a programme extending cybercrime awareness, digital literacy and legal assistance to senior citizens in City on Saturday.

The programme will be held between 10am and 1pm at Kothanur CSI Church under Elders' Helpline initiative, Bengaluru Police Commissioner B Dayananda said. "This initiative aims to empower senior citizens with the knowledge and skills to navigate the digital world safely," Dayananda said.

The sessions will cover safe mobile phone usage, downloading apps securely, online banking practices and recognising phishing scams.

The programme comes in the wake of a rise in cyberattacks targeting vulnerable demographics, including senior citizens.

The programme extending digital literacy and legal assistance will be held at Kothanur, said City Police Commissioner B Dayananda ***PHOTO: PTI***

- The sessions will cover safe mobile phone usage, downloading apps securely, online banking practices and recognising phishing scams. For more information, contact 7899241090 or 080-23352833

During the session, experienced lawyers will also be available to extend legal help. For more information, citizens can contact 7899241090 or 080-23352833, the police chief said.

In October, a similar event was organised by the City police in Malleswaram and Sahakarnagar during which over 180 senior citizens underwent training on safe use of smartphones and online payments. *—PTI*

REMOVAL OF STALLS

Irked street vendors to meet BBMP Chief

BENGALURU, 7 NOV

A group of street vendors at KR Market in City will approach BBMP Chief Tushar Girinath after Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike (BBMP) marshals removed their stalls for encroaching on footpaths.

The vendors claimed that their stalls and tents were removed without notice by the marshals on Wednesday and Thursday. The vendors said they have been there for decades and are not doing anything illegal. The vendors will urge the BBMP Commissioner to allow them to continue with their businesses as their livelihoods are at stake.

"We have invested money by taking loans. They have destroyed our shop without any concern. This is the only means for us to earn our daily bread," said Sunil Gowda, a vegetable seller and a resident of Magadi Road.

A woman vendor, Raniyamma, said, "I have been working here for so many years. Now BBMP is telling me to find another place. They are supposed to arrange another plot first before eviction, or they have to at least make alternative arrangements. My family depends on this for our livelihood. But they razed everything here without providing any alternative. Now where do we have to go?" she said.

Meanwhile, a BBMP official said due to the encroachment on footpaths, residents in KR Market were forced to walk on the road putting them at risk of accidents besides hindering smooth traffic. *—Salar News*

The vendors at KR Market claimed that their stalls and tents were removed without notice by BBMP marshals on Wednesday & Thursday ***PHOTO: BBMP***

CM hits back at Maha BJP over 'misleading' ads

BENGLAURU, 7 NOV

Hitting out at the Maharashtra BJP for issuing 'misleading' advertisements titled "Vaada Kiya, Dhoka Diya" (Made promises, but betrayed) and accusing the Karnataka government of unfulfilled assurances, Chief Minister Siddaramaiah on Thursday sharply countered it with a slogan "Vaada Diya, Poora Kiya" (Made promises, fulfilled them).

Addressing an Assembly by-poll campaign rally in this town in Ballari district, he emphasised on Karnataka government's 'successful implementation' of guaranteed schemes, including free bus travel for women -Shakti scheme.

- BJP issuing ads titled "Vaada Kiya, Dhoka Diya" (made promises, but betrayed). CM countered it with "Vaada Diya, Poora Kiya" (made promises, fulfilled them)

Highlighting BJP's 'pattern of spreading falsehoods', dubbing it their 'family tradition', Siddaramaiah stressed that Karnataka's five major guarantee schemes are running smoothly, unlike "BJP's broken promises", he added.

CM Siddaramaiah called out on Prime Minister Narendra Modi's promises, and asked, "Where are your 'Achhe din'?" *—PTI*

India urges B'desh to take measures to guard Hindus

NEW DELHI, 7 NOV

Amid reports of tension in Bangladesh's Chittagong following provocative social media posts, India on Thursday urged Dhaka to take action against "extremist" elements and ensure the safety of the country's Hindu community.During a weekly media briefing here, MEA spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal condemned the alleged attack on the members of the Hindu community in Chittagong.The tension was the result of "incendiary posts" on social media, he said. India appeals to the Bangladesh government to take action against such extremist elements, and also ensure the safety of Hindus in Bangladesh, Jaiswal said. *—PTI*

Bengal bypolls: 7 candidates have criminal cases

KOLKATA, 7 NOV

Out of 41 candidates contesting the West Bengal Assembly by polls on 13 November, seven face serious criminal charges and another seven are crorepatis, per an analysis by West Bengal Election Watch and ADR. The by polls cover Coochbehar Sitai (SC), Haroa, Naihati, Medinipur, Taldangra, and Madarihat (ST). The BJP has four candidates with serious charges, while TMC and Congress have two and one, respectively. These cases include severe crimes like assault, kidnapping, and corruption.The Congress leads in wealthy candidates with three crorepatis, followed by BJP with two. TMC's Sanat Dey (Naihati) is the richest with assets worth Rs 4.9 crore, followed by BJP's Ananya Roy Chakraborty Rs 2.98 crore and Kashikanta Barman from the Kamatapur Peoples Party (United) has the least assets at Rs 5,000. The average candidate's asset value is Rs 58.14 lakh. *—PTI*

PHOTO: PTI

Naidu warns against abuse on social media

AMARAVATI, 7 NOV

Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu on Thursday issued a stern warning against misuse of social media for character assassination and defamation of women. Addressing a public meeting in Thallayapalem village during the inauguration of several power projects, Naidu criticised the reckless language used on social media, particularly against women. The Chief Minister noted that defamatory remarks had been made not only against him but also against his family and Home Minister Vangalapudi Anitha."The language on social media is reckless. They are making objectionable comments about women. Should we not take action? Should I ignore it? Naidu said. *—PTI*

Trump proves age no factor in politics: TMC leader

KOLKATA, 7 NOV

TMC MP Kalyan Banerjee on Thursday said Donald Trump's victory as US president has proved that age is not a factor if someone has popular support, amid the debate in his party over the call for fixing a retirement age for leaders. Ahead of the Lok Sabha elections earlier this year, TMC's general secretary Abhishek Banerjee called for implementing a retirement age in politics, citing a decline in work efficiency, productivity, and decision-making abilities. "In politics, age is not the factor, if one is capable of working for the people of the country and capable to discharge all functions, if he is popular amongst the people, then he can remain in politics," said the four-time MP from Serampore. "Trump won the election at the age of 78," he added.*—PTI*

J&K BJP leaders clash with MLAs, marshals in Assembly

Assembly adjourned as protest breaks out over Art 370 resolution

SRINAGAR, 7 NOV

The Jammu and Kashmir Assembly was adjourned for the day on Thursday following a brawl between BJP MLAs and marshals. This was as the Opposition members protested against a resolution for the restoration of the erstwhile state's special status for the second consecutive day.

While BJP said the resolution is "illegal" and demanded its withdrawal, the Speaker said he does not have such powers as anything passed by the House can only be undone by the House itself.

Amid high drama, the day also witnessed a group of MLAs, including those from the PDP and Peoples' Conference, submitting a fresh resolution demanding immediate restoration of Articles 370 and 35A of the Constitution in their original form.

Ruckus in the Jammu and Kashmir Assembly after the Speaker directed eviction of BJP MLAs, in Srinagar, on Thursday **PHOTO: PTI**

As soon as the Assembly met in the morning, pandemonium broke out as the BJP members protested against the resolution that was passed on Wednesday.

While Leader of Opposition Sunil Sharma (BJP) was speaking on the resolution, Awami Ittehad Party leader Sheikh Khursheed jumped into the well with a banner that read Articles 370 and 35A be restored.

This irked the BJP members, who also jumped into the well, snatched the banner from the Langate MLA and tore it into pieces.

There was a minor scuffle between the BJP MLAs and Khursheed. Finding the latter outnumbered, Peoples' Conference MLA Sajad Lone came to the rescue of the legislator from his neighbouring constituency.

BJP MLAs raised slogans, such as "Balidan huye jahan Mookerjee, woh Kashmir hamara hai", while the NC members shouted "Jis Kashmir ko khoon se seencha, woh Kashmir hamara hai".

As the uproar continued, the Speaker issued directions that nothing should be recorded or reported.

He then directed marshalling out of the BJP members, who stormed the well, leading to a scuffle between them and the marshals. *—PTI*

Article 370 will not be restored: BJP

BJP on Thursday termed the passage of a resolution in the Jammu and Kashmir Assembly seeking restoration of special status as an "attempt to divide India" by the INDIA bloc parties and asserted that it will not let them succeed in their effort.

Coming down heavily on the ruling National Conference (NC) and its allies, senior BJP leader Smriti Irani said passage of the resolution in the Jammu and Kashmir Assembly on Wednesday amounts to "disregard and insult" to the "decision" taken by Parliament and the Supreme Court on the scrapping of Article 370 of the Constitution.

"The resolution shows the tactical support of the leaders of the Congress and the INDI Alliance to extremism and terrorism,' she told a press conference at the BJP headquarters here. BJP is up in arms against the Omar Abdullah government after the Assembly on Wednesday passed the resolution asking the Centre to hold dialogue with elected representatives for restoration of special status of the erstwhile state.

The Congress is not part of the government despite fighting the polls in alliance with the NC. *—PTI*

The Gorkhas in Jammu held a protest against the resolution seeking the restoration of Jammu and Kashmir's special status passed in the Assembly, and burnt effigies of Deputy Chief Minister Surinder Kumar Choudhary. The protesters demanded a separate state for the Jammu region **PHOTO: PTI**

SENA(UBT) MANIFESTO

Will junk Dharavi project: Uddhav

MUMBAI, 7 NOV

Shiv Sena (UBT) Chief Uddhav Thackeray on Thursday unveiled his party's manifesto for the Maharashtra Assembly polls, assuring free education for male students, stabilising prices of essential items and scrapping of the Dharavi redevelopment project.

Thackeray, while releasing the manifesto at his residence 'Matoshree' in Mumbai, said most of the poll promises are part of the Opposition Maha Vikas Aghadi's (MVA) overall assurances, but there are some points which need special attention.The MVA, which comprises the Shiv Sena (UBT), Congress and Sharad Pawar's NCP (SP), will also launch its manifesto for the 20 November state Assembly polls, he said. *—PTI*

Mumbai workers get paid leave on 20 Nov

The Mumbai district election officer has said all establishments, businesses and other workplaces within the Brihanmumbai limits are mandated to grant leave to their employees for voting in the Maharashtra assembly polls on 20 November. Violations to this directive by employers will result in action.

What does the manifesto promise?

1. Temple of Maratha king Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj in every district.
2. Implement the Old Pension Scheme.
3. Remove the cap on 50% reservation.
4. Free education if policy for male students.
5. Free travel for women in public transport buses.
6. Recruit 18,000 women in state's police force.
7. Establish all female police stations.
8. Affordable houses to be built in urban, semi-urban and rural areas.
9. Scrap cluster development of Koliwadas (fishing community settlements) and Gaothans (villages).

Row over midnight raid in Palakkad

PALAKKAD, 7 NOV

The political clash surrounding a late-night police raid at a hotel in bypoll-bound Palakkad has escalated, with the ruling CPI(M) in Kerala calling for an investigation. The raid was reportedly conducted on suspicion of black money being brought in ahead of the election. CPI(M) state secretary M V Govindan justified the probe after CCTV footage showed a Congress worker entering the hotel with a trolley bag.

Govindan stated, "CPI(M) will resist the flow of black money for the by polls. There is evidence suggesting black money was brought to Palakkad, necessitating a probe."

In response, the Congress-led UDF accused the CPI(M) of leaking the footage to the media. Opposition leader VD Satheesan lodged a complaint with the Election Commission of India, accusing the CPI(M)-led government of misusing police resources and staging the raid.

> **It was wrong for male policemen to enter women's rooms in the middle of the night under the pretext of a hotel raid**
>
> -Priyanka Gandhi Vadra, Cong ledaer

Satheesan's complaint described the operation as preplanned, highlighting that CPI(M) and BJP activists had gathered outside the hotel even before the raid commenced. *—PTI*

INDIA CANCELS CONSULAR CAMPS IN CANADA OVER SECURITY

TORONTO, 7 NOV

The Consulate General of India in Toronto on Thursday said it is cancelling some of its scheduled consular camps after the Canadian security authorities conveyed their inability to provide minimum security protection to its organisers.

The announcement comes days after an incident of violent disruption by protestors carrying Khalistani flags at a consular event co-organised by the Hindu Sabha temple in Brampton and the Indian Consulate.

On 3 November, the protest occurred at the Hindu Sabha temple in Brampton and unverified videos circulating on social media appeared to show demonstrators holding banners in support of Khalistan. The protestors clashed with people and disrupted the consular event.

The incident was condemned by Prime Minister Justin Trudeau who said every Canadian has the right to practise their faith freely and safely.

India condemned the attack with an expectation that those indulging in violence "will be prosecuted".

The relations between India and Canada came under severe strain following Trudeau's allegations in September last year of a "potential" involvement of Indian agents in Khalistan extremist Hardeep Singh Nijjar's killing. *—PTI*

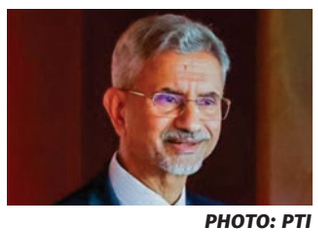


PHOTO: PTI

EAM MEETS CEOs, BIZ LEADERS IN AUSTRALIA

SYDNEY, 7 NOV

External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar on Thursday met CEOs and business leaders in Australia and highlighted natural complementarities between the two nations to support each other's growth.

He is on an official visit to Australia. "Our robust business and investment linkages are key drivers of our Comprehensive Strategic Partnership," he added. Jaishankar also met members of the diaspora, MPs and friends of India at New South Wales Parliament in Sydney. He also participated in a discussion with foreign affairs and strategy experts at the Lowy Institute, a think tank in Sydney. *—PTI*

Sule rules out reunion with Ajit & race for CM

MUMBAI, 7 NOV

NCP (SP) Working President Supriya Sule has said political rapprochement with Maharashtra Deputy Chief Minister Ajit Pawar is not possible till he is aligned with BJP and said she will not be a chief minister post aspirant if the MVA is voted to power.

In an exclusive interview to PTI, four-time Lok Sabha member Sule said people voted very assertively in the 2024 Lok Sabha elections and there is clarity in the voters' mind now. She feels the opposition Maha Vikas Aghadi (MVA), comprising the NCP (SP), Congress and Uddhav Thackeray-led Shiv Sena (UBT) will also do much better in the 20 November state Assembly polls.

Out of the total 48 Lok Sabha seats, MVA won 30 seat, and an independent supporting the opposition alliance also emerged victorious. *—PTI*

Supriya Sule **PHOTO: PTI**

Sena suspends Gaikwad, who was shot by BJP MLA in Thane

Controversial Shiv Sena leader from Kalyan in Thane, Mahesh Gaikwad, and nine other members of the ruling outfit have been suspended for "anti-party" activities during the election process. Mahesh Gaikwad hit headlines in February when he was shot at by BJP MLA Ganpat Gaikwad inside a police station in Thane over an old enmity.

Anti-govt: Sukhu's staff eats CM's snack

SHIMLA, 7 NOV

A matter of refreshments getting served to the staff of Himachal Pradesh Chief Minister Sukhvinder Singh Sukhu instead of the Chief Minister by mistake has assumed disproportionate dimensions following a CID probe that termed the goof up an "anti-government" act. Due to a lack of coordination, three boxes of samosas and cakes were brought from Hotel Radisson Blue in Lakkar Bazaar to be served to Sukhu, who had gone to the CID headquarters for a function on 21 October. However, the eatables were served to his security staff, according to the enquiry report conducted by a Deputy SP rank officer. A highly placed official in the CID department wrote in his noting that all persons named in the enquiry report have acted in anti-CID and anti-government manner. *—PTI*

Oppn to boycott next round of Waqf bill JPC meets

KOLKATA, 7 NOV

Alleging high-handedness and arbitrary action of the chairman of the JPC on the Waqf Amendment Bill, Trinamool Congress MP Kalyan Banerjee on Thursday said opposition members of the Joint Parliamentary Committee will boycott the next round of meetings beginning 9 November.

Banerjee, a member of the JPC on the Waqf Amendment Bill, said the chairman of the JPC, BJP's Jagdambika Pal, has fixed a series of hectic schedule of meetings in Guwahati, Bhubaneswar, Kolkata, Patna and Lucknow over six days, with Sunday being a holiday in between. All the opposition members of the JPC have decided to boycott the tour and its meetings as the chairman is working in an arbitrary and high-handed manner, Banerjee told reporters at a press conference jointly addressed with party MP Nadimul Haque at the Press Club. He said the future course of action will be decided jointly by the members of the opposition, very soon.

Banerjee said the opposition members of the JPC met the Lok Sabha Speaker on 5 November and sought deferment of the schedule and reduction in the number of days of meetings of the JPC from two days a week to one day a week or two consecutive days every fortnight.

He said the Speaker had verbally agreed to sympathetically consider their demands and speak to the chairman, but nothing happened thereafter. Banerjee also alleged that the process in which the chairman of the committee was proceeding was violative of well-established parliamentary norms. *—PTI.*

MODI-TRUMP FRIENDSHIP

India, US ties set to remain strong under Trump govt

WASHINGTON, 7 NOV

The India-US relationship is set to expand under the Donald Trump administration, but there could be some unease on issues like imports, tariffs and immigration, strategic affairs experts have said after the Republican leader won the fiercely contested presidential election.

The difficult issues between the two sides are likely to be addressed amicably as both Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Trump have a great friendship, they said.

In his election campaign, Trump proposed higher tariffs on foreign goods, especially imports from China and vowed to rid the US of all undocumented immigrants by launching a major deportation programme.

Shortly after it became clear that Trump would be the next US President, Capitol Hill veteran and Communication Strategist Anang Mittal said leading figures in the Republican Party and conservative intellectuals consider the future of the India-US relationship as "pivotal" in shaping the 21st century.

A day ahead of the election, Dhruva Jaishankar, the executive director of the America chapter of the Observer Research Foundation, said New Delhi may require some difficult negotiations over trade and immigration with the Trump administration. Mittal said Trump will approach India-US ties through his personal relationship with Modi and seek bilateral agreements on trade, defence, and foreign direct investment. "Trump's primary goal will be to reaffirm American credibility with Indo-Pacific partners as he seeks to counterbalance China's influence," he said. "His closeness with Silicon Valley leaders will be a positive, as they aim to expand in Indian markets," he added. *—PTI*

MODI, TRUMP COMMIT TO STRENGTHENING TIES: MEA

NEW DELHI, 7 NOV

Prime Minister Narendra Modi and US President-elect Donald Trump have "reaffirmed their commitment" to working together to further strengthen bilateral ties across a range of sectors, Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) said on Thursday.

In a statement on the phone conversation Modi had with Trump a day ago, MEA said the Modi highlighted that the US leader's "spectacular and resounding victory" in the election reflected the "deep trust" of the American people in his leadership and vision. *—PTI*

PHOTO: PTI

Assam Guv opens 1st check post along Bhutan border

DARRANGA, 7 NOV

Assam Governor Lakshman Prasad Acharya inaugurated the first integrated check post (ICP) along the India-Bhutan border at Darranga in Assam on Thursday, officials said. Bhutan Prime Minister Dasho Tshering Tobgay was present at the event. The ICP, set up on 14.5 acres about 700 metres from the India-Bhutan border, is equipped with an office complex, parking areas, loading and unloading zones, a weigh-bridge, a warehouse and residential quarters for officials. Developed by Land Ports Authority of India, it also features inspection spaces, plant quarantine systems and parking facilities to ensure efficient operations.

PHOTO: PTI

HC closes plea against ban on 'The Satanic Verses'

NEW DELHI, 7 NOV

Delhi High Court has closed the proceedings on a petition challenging the Rajiv Gandhi government's decision to ban the import of Salman Rushdie's controversial novel, 'The Satanic Verses', in 1988, saying since authorities have failed to produce the relevant notification, it has to be presumed that it does not exist. In an order passed on 5 November, a bench headed by Justice Rekha Palli observed that the petition, which was pending since 2019, was therefore infructuous and the petitioner would be entitled to take all actions in respect of the book as available in law. The Centre banned the import of the Booker Prize-winning author's 'The Satanic Verses' for law-and-order reasons in 1988, after Muslims across the world viewed it as blasphemous. *—PTI*

2 Goa women cops booked for colleague's suicide

PANAJI, 7 NOV

Two women police constables, arrested for allegedly abetting the suicide of a male colleague, jumped from the first floor of the Central Jail at Colvale in North Goa on Thursday, a prison official said.The official said that the constables – Priti Chawan, 23, and Tanishka Chawan, 21, – sustained minor injuries and were shifted to North Goa District Hospital in Mapusa town.The crime branch had arrested the two on November 4 after constable Prathamesh Gawade jumped to death from Zuari Bridge on October 25. In a video message recorded before he took his life, Gawade had accused the two women constables and another man of harassing him. Gawade said he was taking the extreme step due to severe mental distress. *—PTI*

Kerala court gives 3 lifer in Kollam collectorate blast

KOLLAM, 7 NOV

A Kerala court on Thursday sentenced to life imprisonment three individuals found guilty in connection with a low-intensity IED blast at the Kollam district collectorate in 2016.District Principal Sessions Court Judge G Gopakumar sentenced each of the three convicts – Abbas Ali (first accused) from Madurai's Ismail Puram, Shamsun Karim Raja (second accused) from Madurai's K Pudur, and Dawood Sulaiman (third accused) from Madurai's Pallivasal – to life imprisonment for offences under the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act, public prosecutor Sicin G Mundakkal said.The three were also sentenced to 10 years each for the offence under section 307 (attempt to murder) of IPC, the prosecutor said. The court also imposed a fine of Rs 30,000 on each of them, he added.*—PTI*

Govt can't change job eligibility midway: SC

Court says criteria change must meet Article 14's requirements

NEW DELHI, 7 NOV

The Supreme Court on Thursday held that 'rules of the game' for appointment in government jobs cannot be changed midway, unless the procedure permits so.

A five-judge Constitution bench headed by Chief Justice DY Chandrachud said the process commences with the issuance of advertisement calling for applications and ends with filing up of vacancies.

"Eligibility criteria for being placed in the select list notified at the commencement of the recruitment process can't be changed midway through the recruitment process, unless the extant rules so permit or the advertisement which is not contrary to the extant rules so permit," the bench said.

The bench, also comprising Justices Hrishikesh Roy, PS Narasimha, Pankaj Mithal and Manoj Misra, unanimously held that if change of criteria is permissible under the extant rules or advertisement, it would have to meet the requirement of Article 14 (right to equality) of the Constitution and satisfy the test of non-arbitrariness.

The Supreme Court bench said that extant rules having statutory force are binding on the recruiting bodies PHOTO: PTI

"Recruiting bodies subject to the extant rules may devise appropriate procedure for bringing the recruitment process to its logical end, provided the procedure so adopted is transparent, non-discriminatory, non-arbitrary and has a rationale nexus to the object sought to be achieved," Justice Misra said while pronouncing the verdict. The bench said that extant rules having statutory force are binding on the recruiting bodies, both in terms of procedure and eligibility. "Placement in the select list gives no indefeasible right to appointment. The state or its instrumentality for bona fide reason may choose not to fill up the vacancy," it said.

However, the bench clarified that if vacancies exist, the state or its instrumentality cannot arbitrarily deny appointment to persons who are in the zone of consideration in the select list. The top court said that if the extant rules or the advertisement provides for setting of benchmarks for different stages of recruitment process and if any such benchmark is set, the same should be stipulated before the commencement of the recruitment process. *—PTI*

West Bengal has witnessed widespread protests since August following the rape and murder of a doctor in RG Kar Hospital PHOTO: PTI

SC refuses to transfer RG Kar trial outside Bengal

NEW DELHI, 7 NOV

Supreme Court on Thursday refused to transfer the rape and murder trial pertaining to a doctor in Kolkata outside West Bengal.

A bench headed by Chief Justice DY Chandrachud said the trial court judge had sufficient powers to order another investigation upon feeling it necessary after examining the evidence.

The top court also examined the sixth status report filed by CBI in relation to the case of rape and murder at Kolkata's R G Kar Medical College and Hospital, but refrained from making observations saying the probe was underway.

The apex court noted that a Kolkata court had framed charges against prime accused, Sanjay Roy, on 4 November and a day-to-day trial in the case would start November 11 onwards.

During the hearing, the national task force (NTF), formed to create a protocol over the safety of health professionals, submitted its report in the apex court.

The top court directed the NTF's report to be shared with all states and union territories and posted the hearing after four weeks.

The top court on 15 October questioned the West Bengal government over the hiring of civic volunteers in the state and sought data on their recruitment and appointment process.

The apex court on 30 September expressed dissatisfaction over the state's "tardy" progress in installing CCTVs and building toilets apart from separate resting rooms in government medical colleges, and ordered its completion by 15 October.. *—PTI*

Victim's father to meet Amit Shah

KOLKATA, 7 NOV

The father of the woman doctor, who was allegedly raped and murdered at RG Kar Medical College and Hospital said he has spoken to Union Home Minister Amit Shah, who has called him for a meeting. He, however, declined to divulge when and where the meeting would be held.

"I have spoken to him (Amit Shah). He has called me (for a meeting). I cannot talk much about it, but the meeting will take place," the man said on Wednesday. The parents of the victim wrote to Shah on October 22, requesting for an appointment to guide and help them get justice.

State BJP leaders had said they would try to arrange a meeting between Shah and the victim's parents during his visit to Kolkata on October 27, but it did not happen. The parents said they were not upset about not getting an audience with Shah during his visit. *—PTI*

Uproar over worm-infested food kits for landslide survivors

WAYANAD, 7 NOV

Survivors of the landslides in Chooralmala-Mundakai in Wayanad district on Thursday alleged that they were given worm-infested food kits by the Meppadi Gram Panchayat, leading to a violent protest by the DYFI on Thursday.

The Meppadi Panchayat is governed by Congress-led UDF.

The protest began with activists displaying the allegedly contaminated food items and staging a sit-in. Tensions escalated when DYFI workers attempted to force their way into the office of the panchayat president. They were blocked by police officers and panchayat members, leading to clashes.

According to local authorities, Panchayat President K Babu and four members were injured and have been admitted to a hospital.

There were complaints that the food distributed by the Meppadi Grama Panchayat contained worm-infested rice, rava, and atta PHOTO: PTI

Earlier, there were complaints that the food kits distributed by the Meppadi Grama Panchayat to landslide victims contained worm-infested rice, rava, and atta. On Thursday, some DYFI activists staged a sit-in protest, displaying the contaminated rice in front of the panchayat office.

The DYFI workers alleged that they were manhandled by members of the local body. However, UDF members claimed that the protesters attempted to force their way into the panchayat president's office and made casteist remarks against him. *—PTI*

AIR 'SEVERE' IN DELHI DURING CHHATH POOJA

NEW DELHI, 7 NOV

Pollution levels in the national capital saw a spike during Chhath pooja on Thursday evening with the Air Quality Index (AQI) recorded at 382 at 6pm, according to the Central Pollution Control Board.

Sixteen weather stations recorded an AQI above 400 with seven more stations seeing the air quality deteriorate to a "severe" level by evening.

The city's AQI in the morning was 367 while the 24-hour average AQI at 4 pm was recorded at 377.

A layer of smog was seen blanketing many areas in the city. According to AQI classifications, a range of 0-50 is considered "good," 51-100 "satisfactory," 101-200 "moderate," 201-300 "poor," 301-400 "very poor," and 401-500 "severe." *—PTI*

IN DELHI

Three held for gangrape of mentally ill woman

NEW DELHI, 7 NOV

Delhi Police have arrested three men for the alleged gang rape of a woman from Odisha with mental disabilities in Sarai Kale Khan on October 10, officials said on Thursday.

The victim is receiving treatment at the AIIMS after the alleged rape. She travelled to Delhi on May 9 without informing her family members, who have filed a case of missing person in Puri, the officials said.

According to police, they received information regarding a woman lying bleeding in Sarai Kale Khan area on October 11. "The police reached the spot and rushed the victim to AIIMS Trauma Centre. Upon arrival at the hospital, the victim disclosed that she had been sexually assaulted by three persons," Deputy Commissioner of Police (Southeast) Ravi Kumar Singh said. A total of 10 police teams were formed and more than 700 CCTV footages were checked, leading to the identification of culprits Prabhu Mahto, Parmod alias Babu and Mohammad Shamsul, Singh said. Parmod confessed that he noticed a woman sitting near the Old Delhi railway station on October 10 and conspired with Shamsul to sexually assault the girl. They dragged her to a deserted area to commit the crime, Singh said. Prabhu Mahto, an auto driver who witnessed the incident, also allegedly raped her and later dumped the victim near Sarai Kale Khan and fled, the DCP said. *—PTI*

PHOTO: PTI

FEMA PROBE: ED RAIDS VENDORS OF FLIPKART, AMAZON

NEW DELHI, 7 NOV

Enforcement Directorate on Thursday conducted searches against some of the "main vendors" operating on platforms of e-commerce giants Amazon and Flipkart as part of a foreign direct investment "violation" investigation, official sources said.

A total of 19 premises of these "preferred" vendors located in Delhi, Gurugram and Panchkula (Haryana), Hyderabad (Telangana) and Bengaluru (Karnataka) were covered as part of the action, the sources said.

It is learnt that the ED inspected documents and took copies of some from the premises of about six such vendors who were not named.

The sources said a probe has been initiated by the federal agency under the provisions of the Foreign Exchange Management Act (FEMA) after it received several complaints against the two large e-commerce companies. *—PTI*

Hema panel report: Probe progressing well, says HC

KOCHI , 7 NOV

The Kerala High Court on Thursday said the investigation into the cases filed in connection with the revelations of sexual assault and harassment mentioned in the Justice Hema Committee report was progressing well.

A special division bench of Justices AK Jayasankaran Nambiar and CS Sudha made the observation after the state government filed a report indicating that the progress in the probe into 26 FIRs registered in connection with the revelations in the report.

The court also appointed an amicus curiae to collect and coordinate the various reports, suggestions and draft legislation relating to the issue of sexual harassment in the film industry.

The bench was hearing several petitions related to the report of the panel.

The Advocate General (AG) appearing for the state and the police told the court that of the 26 FIRs registered in connection with the revelations in the report, in five, the complainants are refusing to cooperate with the investigation and in three, the complainants said their statements were not true.

PHOTO: PTI

Following the allegations of sexual harassment and exploitation cropping up against several actors and directors in the wake of the report being made public, the state government on August 25 had constituted a seven-member special investigation team (SIT) to probe them.

The SIT was later handed over the full unedited copy of the report on the directions of the High Court. *—PTI*

500 special trains to handle rush after Chhath Pooja

NEW DELHI, 7 NOV

The Railway Board on Wednesday said it has arranged for more than 500 special trains to handle the return rush of people returning from their home towns, beginning November 8 with the ending of Chhath Puja.

"Special trains have been announced to accommodate returning passengers, with additional trains planned from the Samastipur, Danapur divisions and other divisions as needed to meet local demand," the Board said in a press statement. It said that the rush for Chhath Puja is set to begin after sunrise on November 8 and that it has arranged for 164 special trains to accommodate the high passenger flow on that day.

"Following this, Indian Railways has planned 160 special trains for November 9, 161 for November 10, and 155 for November 11, ensuring sufficient capacity to manage the expected surge in travellers," it added. *—PTI*

LESS THAN 2,000 CALORIES

Nutrition intake insufficient in 80% of rural population

NEW DELHI, 7 NOV

India's Rural population has been grappling with decline in food and nutrition intake after the advent of the neo-liberal policies in the early 1990s with an estimated 80 per cent of them now having less than 2,200 calories per day, according to economist Utsa Patnaik.

"The nutritional intake data is not there. But from whatever there is, by using certain approximations, I estimate that more than 80 per cent of the rural population has slipped below 2,200 calories per day intake," she said while delivering the second P Sundarayya memorial lecture on the topic 'Agrarian Distress, Worker-Peasant Alliance and Resistance to Corporate and Imperialist Designs in India' here on Wednesday evening.

"That is what the data tell us. That is what the government's own data from the annual economic surveys and from the National Sample Service tell us. And of course, all these claims of declining mass poverty are completely false," she alleged.

The accepted average calorie requirement in India is 2400 calories per day in rural areas and 2100 calories in urban areas. She also said that while the government was giving five kilograms of foodgrains during the pandemic period, it is difficult to estimate to what extent it reached people. "To what extent this distribution has actually reached the people, the much-doubted 80 crores of people for whom it was intended is something we still have to find out because the entire statistical system of the country has been very thoroughly undermined over the last few years. ," she said. *—PTI*

BookMyShow asked to prevent black market sale

MUMBAI, 7 NOV

Maharashtra police's cyber wing has issued a notice to online ticketing website BookMyShow, asking it to implement strict measures including sale of name-based tickets for the concerts of British band 'Coldplay' in January and other shows.

The notice was issued by the Maharashtra Cyber to prevent exploitation of fans who buy tickets from online platforms.

Many people reported unresponsive websites during critical booking period, he said, adding that it leads to black-marketing of tickets at exorbitant prices, sometimes as high as 10 times the original price. it found that measures taken by the platforms to avoid such situations are insufficient, said the official. *—PTI*

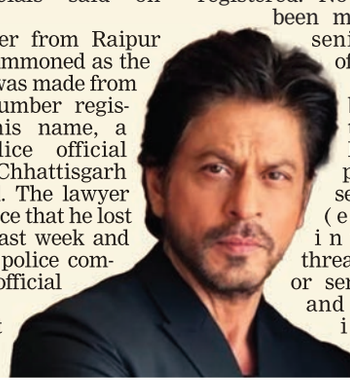
Cops file extortion case as SRK receives death threat

MUMBAI/RAIPUR, 7 NOV

Mumbai police have registered an extortion case and summoned a lawyer from Chhattisgarh in connection with a death threat to Bollywood actor Shah Rukh Khan and a demand for Rs 50 lakh, officials said on Thursday.

The lawyer from Raipur has been summoned as the threat call was made from a phone number registered in his name, a senior police official from the Chhattisgarh capital said. The lawyer told the police that he lost his phone last week and had filed a police complaint, the official said.

The threat to Shah Rukh Khan follows a series of threats issued to fellow actor Salman Khan, allegedly from the Lawrence Bishnoi gang. "Bandra police station received a call threatening Shah Rukh Khan and asking for Rs 50 lakh. An offence has been registered. No arrest has been made yet," a senior police official said.



A case has been registered by the Bandra police under sections 308(4) (extortion involving threats of death or serious injury and criminal intimidation). *—PTI*

Apple users question value of iOS amid higher app charges

SALAR EXCLUSIVE

AMINA AFAQ
BENGALURU, 7 NOV

The increased charges on everyday apps on Apple devices have raised doubts among users on whether to continue with iOS phones. "We're paying a premium for using iOS. It is frustrating to be paying more for the same service, especially when there's no clear benefit in return. It makes me wonder if sticking with iOS is worth it," Abdul Hannan, a student from Jain PU College here, told **Salar News**.

NO 3RD PARTY FOR PAYMENTS

Apple's strict policies mandate apps use its in-app payment system, preventing developers from employing third-party services that would allow them to bypass the 30 per cent 'Apple Tax'. Violating this policy can result in apps being removed from the App Store, as was the case with Epic Games in 2020 when they launched an alternate payment system for gaming app Fortnite; Apple later removed Fortnite from the App Store.

The cost of acquiring new users is also more: it reportedly costs $5.11 (Rs 429.85) per app installed on the App Store compared to $4.61 (Rs 387.79) on Google Play. It is a price the apps pay advertising platforms such as Google Ads or Facebook Ads each time a user installs their app after clicking on an ad.

SAME PRICE FOR OTT SUBSCRIPTIONS

With the 30 per cent fee on in-app purchases, one might expect that OTT subscriptions for iOS users would be higher than for Android users. However, Salar News found that the prices for these subscriptions are the same across both platforms. So, why aren't OTT services charging different prices when everyday physical goods apps do?

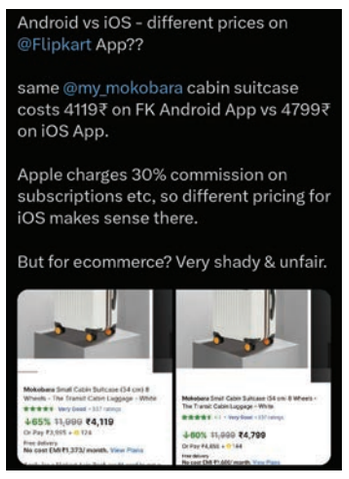
Well, Apple Tax is not the sole reason for the discrepancy. Author of 'Daily Coffee & Startup Fundraising' and Instagram influencer Sarthak Ahuja, who has over 1.9M followers, said these apps use a method called 'Occasion Based Pricing and Promotion for Consumer Goods' (OBPPC) to decide on pricing for customers.

Uber, Ola, Amazon, flight and hotel booking apps and food delivery apps opt for price discrimination under OBPPC to quote a price users are willing to pay, irrespective of the platform. For example, Uber and Ola will charge more depending on rush hours or if it starts raining. Apps collect users' history, such as the items they purchased and the amount of money that was spent per month, and personalise their rates for you. Simply put, they will charge you more if you can afford it.

Yashwanth, Grievance Officer with Ola, told Salar News that pricing is dynamic and depends on a variety of factors including the demand in the area and supply. "External factors such as weather and holidays can also impact pricing," he said.

PHYSICAL GOODS

Even if Apple claims not to impose extra charges on physical goods, users are paying more than they would on Android. A Flipkart user, Saurabh Sharma, recently took to X to highlight the price difference for the same product. "The same Mokobara cabin suitcase costs Rs 4,119 on Flipkart's Android app vs Rs 4,799 on the iOS app. Apple charges a 30 per cent commission on subscriptions, etc., so different pricing for iOS makes sense there. But for e-commerce? Very shady and unfair," Sharma wrote.


Android vs iOS - different prices on @Flipkart App??
same @my_mokobara cabin suitcase costs 4119₹ on FK Android App vs 4799₹ on iOS App.
Apple charges 30% commission on subscriptions etc, so different pricing for iOS makes sense there.
But for ecommerce? Very shady & unfair.

PRICING ISSUE RAISED IN MANY COUNTRIES

This difference in pricing has previously been reported in other countries. In May 2023, a US citizen Ross Hecox from Maryland sued US-based food delivery app DoorDash, claiming that the delivery service charges extra fees for orders made on iPhones compared to Android devices. It was alleged that customers using DashPass, DoorDash's subscription service, are hit with additional costs on each order.

Amal Sony, who has been coding since he was a teen and has developed two apps, said Android and iOS apps are not directly compatible, so the app developers need separate teams for each platform: one for Android and one for iOS, which costs app developers more. "In India, there are far more Android users than iOS users, so the overhead costs for Android are smaller than iOS, which results in higher prices for users. Additionally, iOS development requires Mac computers, adding to the overall costs," he added.

'IT IS DECEPTION'

"It is highly unethical and unlawful for Apple and the apps to charge extra without informing users. It is deception, and that is not okay," iOS user Alia said. Apple and the apps need to address this issue publicly and "not over a post on social media", she said.

Saandra, an iOS user, thinks Apple will not address the problem till it becomes a widely discussed issue. "I would like for them to make prices fair, but that would also mean Google and other big tech companies would do the same," she said.

Uber, MakeMyTrip, Yatra and Google did not reply despite Salar News repeatedly mailing them; Apple refused to be quoted for the story.

BYPASSING HIGH PRICE

Netizens claim that they avoided the higher prices on iOS by purchasing subscriptions for apps such as Google Storage on a Windows PC using the same email ID or account that was on their Apple device.

Maaz Mohammed, who is pursuing his Master's in Artificial Intelligence at the University of Cleveland, told Salar News, that Apple products are part of the most high-end technology, hence the high pricing. "The apps are not at fault since they have to pay Apple the extra fee, and they make up for it with increased prices," he said.

APPLE AND ITS LEGAL TROUBLES

In July 2024, the antitrust body, Competition Commission of India, found that Apple exploited its dominant position in the app market, forcing developers to use its proprietary in-app payment system. Apple has denied any wrongdoing, claiming it is a small player in India's smartphone market, which is largely dominated by Android devices. This scrutiny is not limited to India. In March 2024, Apple was fined over €1.8 billion by European Commission for preventing competitors like Spotify from informing users about payment options outside the App Store. To resolve a similar antitrust case in the EU, Apple has begun allowing rival mobile wallets access to its "tap to pay" functionality. Meanwhile, South Korea has passed a law banning the practice of requiring apps to use a single payment system, although its implementation has faced delays.

APPLE GUIDELINES

Apple guidelines state that apps should never prey on users or attempt to rip off customers, raise prices in a tricky manner, charge for features or content that are not delivered, or engage in any other manipulative practices within or outside of the app. "And while pricing is up to you, we won't distribute apps and in-app purchase items that are clear rip-offs. We'll reject expensive apps that try to cheat users with irrationally high prices," Apple tells the developers.

However, even with its guidelines, Apple has not taken any action against DoorDash or other apps violating the guidelines.

A LOT OF SPENDING

A 2016 report by AppsFlyer, the leading global mobile marketing attribution analytics company, says iOS users spend nearly 2.5 times more than Android users: $1.08 (Rs 90.85) vs $0.43 (Rs 36.17) monthly per app.

The average purchase amount is $12.77 (Rs 1,074.22) on iOS and $6.19 (Rs 520) on Android. It says Asian users spend 40 per cent more on in-app purchases than the rest of the world. In India, iOS users spend around 5.5 times more than Android users $1.12 (Rs 94.21) to $ 0.20 (Rs 16.81), and iOS users are three times more likely to spend on apps than Android users.

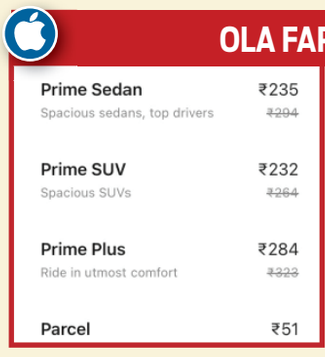
Projections suggest that by 2027, iOS users will spend around $125 billion on in-app purchases, while Android users will spend $60 billion. Abdul Hannan claims that iPhone users are caught in a cycle where they are paying more not just for the device, but also for the services on it.

RATES ON APPLE & ANDROID

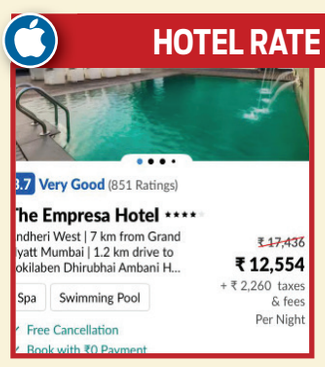
UBER FARE FOR 5KM

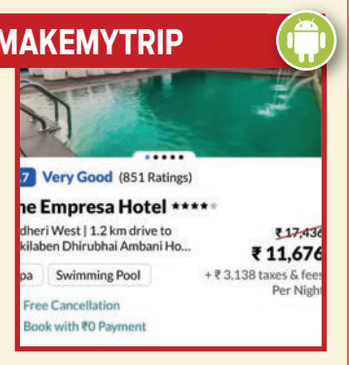
Uber Auto 3 ₹121.18
11:58pm • 3 min away
No bargaining, doorstep pick-up
Moto 1 ₹45.72
12:00am • 5 min away ₹65.31
Affordable motorcycle rides
UberXL 6 ₹190.88
12:03am • 7 min away ₹262.46
Comfortable SUVs

OLA FARE FOR 5KM

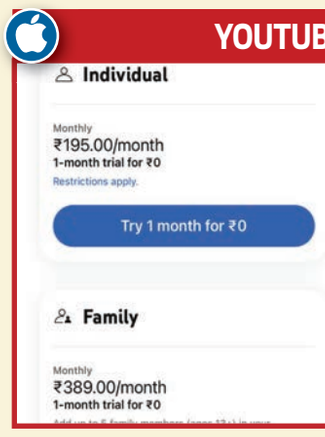


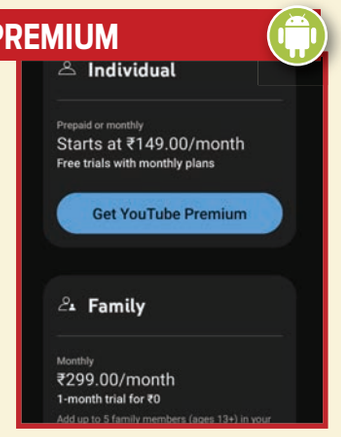
HOTEL RATE IN MAKEMYTRIP





YOUTUBE PREMIUM





PRICES FOR A 5KM RIDE IN BENGALURU

	iOS	Android
Uber Auto	Rs 154	Rs 121
Uber Moto	Rs 64	Rs 45
Ola Mini	Rs 149	Rs 143
Ola Sedan	Rs 174	Rs 168
Ola Parcel	Rs 115	Rs 51

YOUTUBE PREMIUM SUBSCRIPTION

	iOS	Android
Individual	Rs 195 per month	Rs 149
Family	Rs 389	Rs 299

BUYING GOOGLE STORAGE

	iOS	Android
30 GB	Not available	Rs 59
100 GB	Rs 179	Rs 130
200 GB	Rs 269	Rs 210

APPLE OVER ANDROID

Even with the pricing issues, users say they would prefer Apple over Android any day because of its privacy and security features. "I feel confident that my data is safeguarded, and the regular updates ensure I'm always protected against the latest threats," said Priya, a 21-year-old student from Bengaluru.

Faraz, a Bengaluru techie, says he would choose iOS over Android any day as it has better performance, camera, and security. "The high price is worth it," he said.

DESIGN: G VISHWANATHA

WHAT TRUMP'S VICTORY MEANS FOR...

...UKRAINE

KYIV, 7 NOV

Donald Trump's return to the White House in January 2025, combined with a Republican-led US Senate, was widely feared among international allies and will be cheered by some of America's foes. While the former put on a brave face, the latter are finding it hard to hide their glee.

On the war in Ukraine, Trump is likely to try to force Kyiv and Moscow into at least a ceasefire along the current front lines. This could possibly involve a permanent settlement that would acknowledge Russia's territorial gains, including the annexation of Crimea in 2014 and the territories occupied since the full-scale invasion of Ukraine in February 2022.

It is also likely that Trump would accept demands by the Russian President Vladimir Putin to prevent a future Ukrainian Nato membership. Given Trump's well-known animosity to Nato, this would also be an important pressure on Kyiv's European allies. Trump could, once again, threaten to abandon the alliance in order to get Europeans to sign up to a deal with Putin over Ukraine.

In Europe, the fear is that Trump may make deals with Russia over the head of its EU and Nato allies and threaten them with abandonment. *—PTI*

...MIDDLE EAST

JERUSALEM, 7 NOV

When it comes to the Middle East, Trump has been a staunch supporter of Israel and Saudi Arabia in the past. He is likely to double down on this, including by taking an even tougher line on Iran. This aligns well with Israeli prime minister Benjamin Netanyahu's current priorities.

Netanyahu seems determined to destroy Iran's proxies Hamas, Hezbollah and the Houthis in Yemen and severely degrade Iranian capabilities. By dismissing his defence minister, Yoav Gallant, a critic of his conduct of the offensive in Gaza, Netanyahu has laid the ground for a continuation of the conflict there.

It also prepares for a widening of the offensive in Lebanon and a potentially devastating strike against Iran in response to any further Iranian attack on Israel.

Trump's election will embolden Netanyahu to act. And this in turn would also strengthen Trump's position towards Putin, who has come to depend on Iranian support for his war in Ukraine. Trump could offer to restrain Netanyahu in the future as a bargaining chip with Putin in his gamble to secure Ukraine deal.*—PTI*

...CHINA

BEIJING, 7 NOV

Relations with China will most likely be characterised more by continuity than by change. With Chinese relations being perhaps the key strategic foreign policy challenge for the US, the Biden administration continued many of the policies Trump adopted in his first term – and Trump is likely to double down on them in a second term.

A Trump White House is likely to increase import tariffs, and he has talked a great deal about using them to target China. But Trump is also just as likely to be open to deals with Chinese president Xi Jinping. A question mark hangs over Trump's commitment to the defence of Taiwan and other treaty allies in Asia. *—PTI*

> **I urge China and the US to expand mutually beneficial cooperation. I call for the right way for China, and the US to get along in the new era as both the countries are the top two economies of the world.**
>
> —Xi Jinping, Chinese President

Federal Reserve to cut interest rates

Federal Reserve officials are poised on Thursday to reduce their key interest rate for a second straight time, responding to a steady slowdown of the inflation pressures that exasperated many Americans and contributed to Donald Trump's presidential election victory. Yet the Fed's future moves are now more uncertain in the aftermath of the election, given that Trump's economic proposals have been widely flagged as potentially inflationary. *—PTI*

Trump to fire Smith within '2 seconds'

Donald Trump said that he will fire special counsel Jack Smith "within two seconds" of taking office. Trump was asked during an interview with conservative radio host Hugh Hewitt whether he would first pardon himself or terminate Smith to remove the legal cloud hanging over him. Smith, who was appointed by Attorney General in 2022, has charged Trump over his efforts to overturn the 2020 election and his mishandling of classified documents.

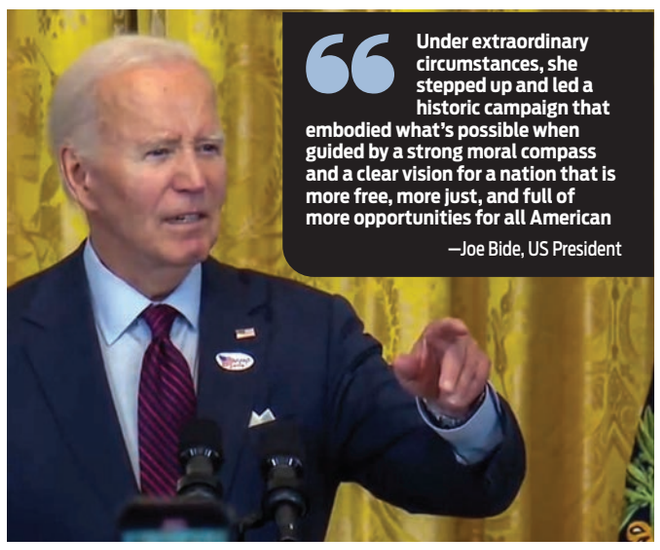
> **In the past few hours, I have heard from my friend @elonmusk. I am convinced that his commitment and vision will be an important resource for the US and Italy, in a spirit of collaboration aimed at addressing future challenges**
>
> -Giorgia Meloni, Italian PM

Musk sued over $1m poll day giveaway

Elon Musk was sued in a proposed class action on Tuesday by registered voters who signed his petition to support the Constitution for a chance to win his $1 million-a-day giveaway, and now claim it was a fraud. The complaint filed by Arizona resident Jacqueline McAferty in the Austin, Texas federal court said Musk and his America PAC organization falsely induced voters to sign by claiming they would choose winners randomly, though they were predetermined.

Biden blamed for Kamala's loss

WASHINGTON, 7 NOV



> **Under extraordinary circumstances, she stepped up and led a historic campaign that embodied what's possible when guided by a strong moral compass and a clear vision for a nation that is more free, more just, and full of more opportunities for all American**
>
> —Joe Bide, US President

Joe Biden's name wasn't on the ballot, but history will likely remember Kamala Harris' resounding defeat as his loss too.

As Democrats pick up the pieces following President-elect Donald Trump's decisive victory, some of the Harris' backers are expressing frustration that Biden's decision to seek re-election until this summer — despite longstanding voter concerns about his age and unease about post-pandemic inflation as well as the US-Mexico border — all but sealed his party's loss of the White House.

Biden will leave office after leading the US out of the worst pandemic in a century, galvanising international support for Ukraine in the aftermath of Russia's invasion and passing a $1 trillion infrastructure bill that will impact communities for years to come.

But having run four years ago against Trump to "restore the soul of the country," Biden will make way after just one term for his immediate predecessor, who overcame two impeachments, a felony conviction and an insurrection launched by his supporters. Trump has vowed to radically reshape the federal government and roll back many of Biden's priorities.

The president on Wednesday stayed out of sight for the second straight day, making congratulatory calls to Democratic lawmakers who won down ballot races as well as one to Trump, who he invited for a White House meeting that the president-elect accepted. *—PTI*

Giuliani to appear in court over asset surrender

NEW YORK, 7 NOV

Rudy Giuliani will appear in a New York City courtroom on Thursday to explain to a federal judge why he hasn't surrendered his valuables as part of a $148 million defamation judgment.

US District Judge Lewis Liman ordered the former New York City mayor to report to court after lawyers for the two former Georgia election workers who were awarded the massive judgment visited Giuliani's Manhattan apartment last week only to discover it had been cleared out weeks earlier.

The judge had set an 29 October deadline for President Donald Trump ally to surrender his possessions to lawyers for Ruby Freeman. Giuliani was found liable for defamation for falsely accusing Freeman of ballot fraud as he pushed Trump's unsubstantiated election fraud allegations during the 2020 campaign. *—PTI*

PHOTO: X

Charges dropped against Thai woman for 2015 bombing

BANGKOK, 7 NOV

A court in Thailand on Thursday acquitted a Thai woman who had been charged with involvement in a 2015 bombing at a shrine in Bangkok that killed 20 people and injured 120. Wanna Suansan was one of three people apprehended out of 17 suspects who authorities said were responsible for the blast at Erawan Shrine, a popular tourist destination, particularly for visitors from China. The Bangkok Southern Criminal Court ruled that there was not enough evidence to link her to the bombing. The two others being tried separately are ethnic Uyghurs, a Muslim minority in China that has suffered repression. *—PTI*

Deforestation in Amazon drops by 31%

AGUA CLARA, 7 NOV

Forest loss in Brazil's Amazon dropped by 30.6 per cent compared to the previous year, officials said Wednesday, the lowest level of destruction in nine years. In a 12-month span, the Amazon rainforest lost 6,288 sq km, roughly the size of the US state of Delaware. The results, announced in Brazil´s presidential palace, sharply contrast with President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva's predecessor, Far-Right leader Jair Bolsonaro, who prioritiSed agribusiness expansion over forest protection and weakened environmental agencies. Deforestation hit a 15-year high during his term. Deforestation in Brazil's vast savannah, known as the Cerrado, decreased by 25.7 per cent, the first decline in five years. The area destroyed reached 8,174 sq km. Located in central Brazil, it is the world's most biodiverse savannah but has fewer legal protections.*—PTI*

Israel to deport Palestinian families

JERUSALEM, 7 NOV

The law was championed by members of PM Benjamin Netanyahu's Likud party and his Far-Right allies ***PHOTO: X@HUMAYUNHUSSAIN***

Israel's Parliament passed a law early on Thursday that would allow it to deport family members of Palestinian attackers, including the country's own citizens, to the war-ravaged Gaza Strip or other locations.

The law, which was championed by members of Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's Likud party and his Far-Right allies, passed with a 61-41 vote but is likely to be challenged in court.

It would apply to Palestinian citizens of Israel and residents of annexed east Jerusalem who knew about their family members' attacks beforehand or who "express support or identification with the act of terrorism."

They would be deported, either to the Gaza Strip or another location, for a period of 7 to 20 years. The Israel-Hamas war is still raging in Gaza, where tens of thousands have been killed and most of the population has been internally displaced, often multiple times.

Dr. Eran Shamir-Borer, a senior researcher at the Israel Democracy Institute and a former international law expert for the Israeli military, said that if the law comes before the Supreme Court, it is likely to be struck down based on previous Israeli cases regarding deportation.

Meanwhile, several large airstrikes hit Beirut's southern suburbs early on Thursday, including one on a site adjacent to Lebanon's only international airport.

Israel announces $5.2B fighter jet deal with Boeing

JERUSALEM, 7 NOV

Israel says it has reached an agreement to purchase 25 advanced F-15 fighter jets from US aerospace giant Boeing for $5.2 billion.

The Defence Ministry said the agreement, concluded Wednesday, was part of a broader aid package approved by the US government earlier this year. Deliveries will begin in 2031, and there's an option for the purchase of an additional 25 aircraft.

The United States has provided crucial military support to Israel as it has battled Hamas in Gaza, Hezbollah in Lebanon and traded fire with Iran. *—PTI*

Germany's Scholz fires minister, govt collapses

BERLIN, 7 NOV

German Chancellor Olaf Scholz ***PHOTO: WIKIPEDIA***

Germany's centre-left Chancellor Olaf Scholz announced Wednesday he was firing Finance Minister Christian Lindner, signalling the collapse of the ruling three-party coalition that relied on Lindner's pro-business party.

After Scholz fired Lindner, the three remaining ministers of the Free Democrats also resigned later at night effectively leading to the government coalition's collapse.

Scholz announced the move at a news conference following weeks of disputes among the coalition partners over ways to boost the country's ailing economy. He said he would seek a vote of confidence in January that he said might lead to early elections that otherwise would be due next September.

Lindner, from the pro-business Free Democrats, had rejected tax increases or changes to Germany's strict self-imposed limits on running up debt. Scholz's Social Democrats and the environmental Greens, who are also part of the coalition, wanted to see massive state investment and rejected the Free Democrats' proposals to cut welfare programmes.

The regular election is scheduled for September 2025. *—PTI*

S Korea's Presient denies wrongdoing

SEOUL, 7 NOV

Yoon Suk Yeol ***PHOTO: WIKIPEDIA***

South Korean President Yoon Suk Yeol denied wrongdoings of any sorts on Thursday in a burgeoning influence-peddling scandal involving him and his wife that's severely hurting his approval ratings and providing political munition to his rivals. The political firestorm coincides with South Korea facing a slew of critical foreign policy issues, such as Donald Trump's election victory to become the next president of the United States and North Korea's reported entry into the Russia-Ukraine war.

The scandal revolves around claims that President Yoon and First Lady Kim Keon Hee improperly influenced the ruling People Power Party to select a specific candidate for a 2022 parliamentary by-election. This was allegedly done at the request of Myung Tae kyun, an election broker and founder of a polling agency, who had conducted free opinion surveys for Yoon before he became president. The issue has been in the spotlight for weeks, with leaked phone calls showing Myung boasting about his sway over the presidential couple and top party officials.

Asked about his ties with Myung during a press conference Thursday, Yoon said, "I didn't do anything inappropriate and have nothing to hide regarding Myung Tae kyun." *—PTI*

LAKI LAKI ERUPTS AGAIN

Indonesia's Mt Lewotobi Laki Laki erupts again on Thursday, spewing a column of hot clouds that rose 2,500m from its peak, three days after an eruption killed nine people. Over 5,816 people were evacuated ***PHOTO: PTI***

'TO PROTECT FROM HARM'

Australia to ban social media for children under 16

MELBOURNE, 7 NOV

The Australian government announced new legislation to set a minimum age of 16 for children to use social media, holding platforms like TikTok, Instagram, and Facebook accountable for compliance. Prime Minister Anthony Albanese stated the move is to protect children from online harm. The law will be introduced to Parliament in November, with a one-year period for platforms to enforce compliance if passed. Penalties will apply to platforms, not parents or children, for breaches.

Albanese emphasized parental concerns over online safety, while Meta's safety head, Antigone Davis, highlighted the need for broader discussions on protective measures. She suggested parental controls in app stores as a simpler solution. TikTok did not comment, and X remained silent.

Critics, including the Digital Industry Group Inc., called the age limit outdated and urged for balanced measures like creating safer online spaces and boosting digital literacy. Over 140 academics opposed the age limit, describing it as an ineffective approach. Jackie Hallan from Reach Out worried it could push children's activities underground, making them less likely to seek help. Child psychologist Philip Tam argued that a lower age limit of 12 or 13 might be more practical. Concerns were also raised about potential family conflicts and barriers to accessing mental health support. *—PTI*

Hurricane Rafael makes landfall in Cuba

HAVANA, 7 NOV

Hurricane Rafael made landfall in Cuba on Wednesday as a powerful Category 3 hurricane, shortly after powerful winds knocked out the country's power grid.

Forecasters warned Rafael could bring "life-threatening" storm surges, winds and flash floods to western swaths of the island after it knocked out power and dumped rain on the Cayman Islands and Jamaica the day before.

The storm was located 65km south-southwest of Havana on Wednesday. It had maximum sustained winds of 185 kph and was moving northwest at 22 kph, according to the National Hurricane Centre. The storm is bad news for Cuba, which is struggling with devastating blackouts while recovering from another hurricane two weeks ago. *—PTI*

Gold slides ₹1,650 to ₹79,500/ 10g; silver plunges

NEW DELHI, 7 NOV

Gold and silver prices slumped in the national capital on Thursday, with the precious metal declining Rs 1,650 and slipping below the Rs 80,000-mark, according to the All India Sarafa Association. Tepid demand by local jewellers amid weak trend overseas as the primary reason behind the fall in prices, traders said. The precious metal slipped Rs 1,650 to Rs 79,500 per 10 grams against the previous close of Rs 81,150 per 10 grams on Wednesday. Silver, too followed suit, plunging Rs 2,900 to Rs 93,800 per kg on reduced offtake by industrial units and coin makers. It had traded flat at Rs 96,700 per kg on Wednesday. Prices of gold of 99.5 per cent purity also slipped Rs 1,650 to Rs 79,100 per 10 grams. —*PTI*

JTL Industries secures Rs 265 cr govt order

NEW DELHI, 7 NOV

JTL Industries on Thursday said it has secured a Rs 265 crore order to supply 36,000 tonnes of galvanized mild steel tubes for a project under the government's Jal Jeevan Mission. The Mission, launched by the Ministry of Jal Shakti in 2019, was inaugurated by Prime Minister Narendra Modi to provide functional household tap connections to every rural household by 2030, the steel pipes maker said. "JTL Industries secured bid as L1 supplier for 36,000 MT GMS tubes in support of Jal Jeevan Mission, Jammu," it said. The Jal Jeevan Mission initiative addresses critical water access and quality issues, aiming to transform rural health and sanitation and reduce waterborne diseases. JTL Industries is a producer of electric resistance welded steel pipes in India with a total capacity of around 7 lakh tonnes. It owns and operates manufacturing facilities in Raipur in Chhattisgarh, Malegaon in Maharashtra, and Mandi and Derahbasi in Punjab.

—*PTI*

Greenzo to set up Rs 500 cr solar plant in Nepal

NEW DELHI, 7 NOV

Greenzo Energy on Thursday announced securing a Rs 500 crore order in Nepal to set up a 120 MW solar project. With this, the company said its current order book stands at Rs 1,900 crore. "This EPC (engineering, procurement and construction) project is part of the commitment to strengthening clean energy infrastructure in South Asia and plays a key role in advancing Nepal's renewable energy ambitions," the company said. The project will be completed by 2025. The infrastructure will be fully ground-mounted, with the development of an advanced high-tension transmission line to connect directly to the Nepal Electricity Authority grid. The surplus power generated by these installations will be fed to the national grid, ensuring an optimised, sustainable energy flow that boosts grid stability and supports broader energy access. —*PTI*

Goods, services exports may cross $800B this fiscal

NEW DELHI, 7 NOV

The country's merchandise and services exports will cross USD 800B this fiscal because of the government support and competitive products of the domestic players, an industry official said on Thursday. Apparel Made-ups and Home Furnishing Sector Skill Council Chairman A Sakthivel said the government has taken a series of steps to enhance the industry's competitiveness in promoting ease of doing business and reducing compliance burden, among others. "The production-linked incentive scheme is already a success story at the manufacturing front," he said. The Indian exporters are getting orders from developing and developed economies. —*PTI*

Sensex, Nifty tank over 1% ahead of US policy decision

Banks, auto shares major drag; Tata & Tech Mahindra lose

MUMBAI, 7 NOV

NSE Nifty declines by 284.70 points PHOTO: X

Snapping its two-day winning run, benchmark Sensex tanked 836 points due to profit-taking in banking and auto shares as investors turned cautious ahead of the US Federal Reserve policy decision and unabated foreign fund outflows.

As the optimism over Donald Trump's win in the US presidential polls waned, the BSE Sensex dropped by 836.34 points, or 1.04 per cent, to settle at 79,541.79. During the day, it slumped 958.79 points or 1.19 per cent to 79,419.34. The NSE Nifty declined 284.70 points or 1.16 per cent to finish at 24,199.35.

From the 30-share Sensex pack, Tata Motors, Tech Mahindra, UltraTech Cement, JSW Steel, Sun Pharma, Asian Paints, IndusInd Bank and ICICI Bank were the major losers. State Bank of India emerged as the only gainer from the pack.

Foreign institutional investors offloaded equities worth Rs 4,445.59 crore on Wednesday, according to exchange data. "The domestic market ended with a deeper cut while eroding the previous day's gains. Disappointing Q2 and persistent selling by FIIs continue to dampen market sentiment.

"The broader market saw a widespread sell-off as optimism over Trump's election victory waned. However, investors are now shifting their attention to the upcoming Fed policy meeting and domestic public outlay, which are anticipated to offer more insight into the future trade path," said Vinod Nair, head of research at Geojit Financial Services.

The BSE midcap gauge declined 0.67 per cent and smallcap index went lower by 0.44 per cent. All sectoral indices ended lower. Metal tumbled 2.54 per cent, utilities (1.82 per cent), commodities (1.65 per cent), realty (1.45 per cent), power (1.42 per cent) and auto (1.40 per cent). A total of 2,134 stocks declined while 1,821 advanced and 98 remained unchanged on the BSE.

"With the focus now on the US Fed post-election, markets are expected to react to the outcome of the FOMC meeting and the Fed Chair's commentary," said Ajit Mishra of Religare Broking. —*PTI*

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Rishit Jhunjhunwala becomes Truecaller's new global CEO

MUMBAI, 7 NOV

PHOTO: TRUECALLER

Software company Truecaller on Thursday, named Rishit Jhunjhunwala as its new CEO. Jhunjhunwala is the current chief of products in the Swedish company and has been working with Truecaller since 2015. Having been employed here since 2015, is also the managing director of the company's India's division.

The new role will be taken up from 9 January, after incumbent Alan Mamedi steps down. The change in leadership comes as Co-founders Alan Mamedi and Nami Zarringhalam announced in their letter that they have decided to give up their operational duties from 30 June 2025. Mamedi and Zarringhalam will now focus on Truecallers's long-term strategy as board members and advisors. In the past decade, Jhunjhunwala has held multiple key positions in the company.

Initially, he was appointed as the head of product in 2015 and was promoted to chief product officer in 2020, and then given the position of managing director of the India branch in 2021.

This comes on the same day as the Income Tax Department conducted multiple raids at the Indian offices of the global caller ID platform on charges of tax evasion, reported PTI. The Stockholm-headquartered company said that the company is cooperating to all the procedures during the investigation.

After the searches, Truecaller issued a public statement saying that it is awaiting official confirmation and communication from the tax department regarding the investigation. —*Agencies*

ON EQUITY OUTLOOKS

Rupee falls 1P to fresh all time low of 84.32 against USD

MUMBAI, 7 NOV

A correction in the dollar index against major currencies helped the Rupee and restrained the slide PHOTO: PTI

The rupee slipped 1 paisa to close at a fresh lifetime low of 84.32 against the US dollar on Thursday, as weak domestic equities and sustained foreign fund outflows dented market sentiment.

Forex traders said investors were also cautious ahead of the US Fed meeting outcome. Moreover, overnight gains in crude oil prices also weighed on the local unit.

However, a correction in the dollar index against major currencies helped the rupee and restrained the slide, they added.

At the interbank foreign exchange, the rupee opened at 84.26 against the US dollar. During the session, the local currency touched a high of 84.26 and a low of 84.38. It finally settled at 84.32, a loss of just 1 paisa against its previous close.

On Wednesday, the rupee depreciated 22 paise to close at an all-time low of 84.31 against the US dollar.

The rupee touched fresh record lows again on the back of weak domestic equities and sustained FII outflows. However, the softening of the US Dollar index from Wednesday's highs cushioned the downside, forex traders said.

Meanwhile, the dollar index, which gauges the greenback's strength against a basket of six currencies, was trading 0.22 per cent lower at 104.86.

Brent crude, the global oil benchmark, fell 0.32 per cent to USD 74.68 per barrel in futures trade. —*PTI*

BSE, Oberoi Realty, Voltas included in MSCI India Index

NEW DELHI, 7 NOV

Five more firms – BSE, Oberoi Realty, Kalyan Jewellers, Alkem Laboratories and Voltas – will be added to the MSCI India Index effective November 25, 2024, according to the latest index review by compiler MSCI.

The changes in the constituents for the MSCI Global Standard Indexes will take place as of the close of November 25, 2024, as per the latest rejig by MSCI.

The shares of BSE jumped 4.50 per cent, Oberoi Realty climbed 3.33 per cent, Kalyan Jewellers soared 2.61 per cent, Voltas went up by 2.10 per cent and Alkem Laboratories advanced 1.79 per cent on the NSE. The MSCI is a leading provider of critical decision support tools and services for the global investment community.

In the MSCI Global Small Cap Indexes, 13 firms will be added while seven would move out effective 25 November. —*PTI*

Adani Energy Solutions shares tumble over 9%

MUMBAI, 7 NOV

Morgan Stanley Capital International (MSCI) has decided not to include Adani energy solutions in its Global Standard Index following a show cause notice from the Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI). The notice relates to alleged misclassification of shareholding by the company, which has led to concerns about its free float. Due to this uncertainty, MSCI announced it would not increase the stock's number of shares or adjust its inclusion factors in the November review.

Shares of Adani energy solutions fell by up to 9 percent to Rs 978 on the Bombay Stock Exchange (BSE) after the announcement.

"As per publicly available disclosures, Adani Energy Solutions has been issued a show cause notice by the Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) for potential wrongful categorisation of shareholding of certain entities," MSCI wrote in its statement. MSCI increased the weightage of HDFC Bank, a move that could potentially bring in 1.9 billion dollars in inflows. Adani energy solutions previously informed exchanges about the SEBI notice, which highlighted potential issues in categorizing certain entities as public shareholders —*Agencies*

Jefferies projects steady growth for banks

NEW DELHI, 7 NOV

The report expects a 13 per cent compound annual growth rate (CAGR) in loan growth for banks between FY24 and FY27 PHOTO: X

Indian banks are expected to have a steady growth in earnings and returns over the next 3–4 years, said a report by Jefferies.

The report expects a 13 per cent compound annual growth rate (CAGR) in loan growth for banks between FY24 and FY27, underpinned by a supportive environment and expected adjustments in interest rates.

"Expect steady growth in earnings and stable returns, Over FY24–27, banks we cover should see 13 per cent Cagr in loans. We factor a 25–50 basis points cut in rates and depending on timing, NIMs will move," the report said.

The report anticipated that interest rates may be reduced by 25–50 basis points (bps) during this period. Depending on the timing, these rate cuts could impact banks' Net Interest Margins, which measure the difference between interest income generated and interest paid to depositors.

The report projects that banks' Net Interest Income, a critical metric indicating earnings from lending, could grow at a steady 12 per cent CAGR, which would support overall earnings growth. Jefferies also noted some areas of caution that could influence growth in other revenue streams, particularly fees. Despite these risks, the report expects banks' return on assets and return on equity to remain healthy. —*PTI*

NEW ALLIANCE

Tata to invest ₹550cr in solar, wind energy

NEW DELHI, 7 NOV

Tata Power has signed two power purchase agreements with the upcoming Noida International Airport project in Uttar Pradesh PHOTO: X

Tata Power will invest Rs 550 crore to develop solar and wind power capacities and related infrastructure to supply clean energy to Noida International Airport (NIA), a statement said.

Tata Power has signed two power purchase agreements with the upcoming Noida International Airport project in Uttar Pradesh.

"Tata Power has entered into a strategic partnership for RE integration with Noida International Airport (NIA). Tata Power will invest Rs 550 crore (USD 66 million) in solar and wind power supply, and the development of critical dry utilities and smart energy infrastructure," the company said in a statement.

Under the arrangement, Tata Power's arm Tata Power Trading Company Ltd (TPTCL) will supply 10.8 MW of wind power to the airport with secured assets from Tata Power Renewable Energy Ltd (TPREL).

TPREL will also develop, operate, and maintain a 13 MW onsite solar power capacity to contribute to the airport's overall energy needs.

Tata Power CEO & MD Praveer Sinha said, "This collaboration will support development of Net Zero Airports, catering to millions of Indians, accelerating the country's path towards a greener future." The airport will be able to cater to 70 million passengers per year.

Christoph Schnellmann, CEO, Noida International Airport, said, "By sourcing more than half of our energy needs from renewable sources, we are taking decisive action towards a more sustainable future. —*PTI*

Bharti Telecom purchases 1.2% stake in Airtel

NEW DELHI, 7 NOV

Bharti Airtel's promoter Bharti Telecom has purchased around 1.2 per cent stake in the company from the Bharti family's investment firm Indian Continent Investment Ltd.

The filing did not disclose the monetary value of the transaction. However, the stake is estimated to be valued at Rs 11,680 crore based on Bharti Airtel's share closing price of Rs 1.598.75 apiece at the BSE.

"Bharti Telecom has acquired around 1.2 per cent shares of Bharti Airtel from India Continent Investment Limited by way of an off-market transaction," Bharti Airtel said in a late night regulatory filing on Wednesday.

Following this transaction, Bharti Telecom holds 40.33 per cent stake in Bharti Airtel, while Indian Continent Investment Ltd will hold 3.31 per cent stake in the company.

Earlier this week, Bharti Telecom had raised Rs 11,150 crore in six tranches for tenor in the range of 3–10 years.

Bharti Airtel Founder and Chairman Sunil Bharti Mittal's family holds 50.56 per cent stake in Bharti Telecom and Singtel holds the rest of the 49.44 per cent stake. —*PTI*

DRIVEN BY STAPLE PRODUCTS

'Rural consumption grows twice as urban'

NEW DELHI, 7 NOV

Urban market contributes to around 62 to 65% of FMCG sales PHOTO: X

Urban and rural markets have shown a sequential recovery in consumer demand and rural areas continue to surpass urban areas in volume growth across most regions of India, said a report from data analytics firm NielsenIQ.

According to the latest NielsenIQ's FMCG Quarterly snapshot, the Indian FMCG (fast-moving consumer goods) industry witnessed a 5.7 per cent value-based growth and 4.1 per cent volume growth on a 1.5 per cent price growth in the July-September quarter.

"Urban consumption growth in Q3 24 was 2.8 per cent, while rural growth increased to 6 per cent from 5.2 per cent in the previous quarter, 2X faster growth than Urban," the report said.

Small and medium FMCG companies had a rebound after facing a decline in some quarters. They had faster growth helped by the food segment in comparison to large FMCG giants in terms of value and volume.

In the September quarter results leading FMCG companies including HUL, Nestle, Dabur, and Tata Consumer Products have reported a softness in the demand from the urban market, mainly on account of high food inflation.

According to industry observers, the urban market contributes to around 62 to 65 per cent of FMCG sales and the rest is from the rural market, which is largely dominated by food products and small offerings. Moreover, in the September quarter, the FMCG industry also had "slight improvement" on the volume front sequentially, the report said.

This uptick in volume growth is largely attributed to staple categories as edible oils, packaged atta, and spices despite price growth. —*PTI*

PHOTO: PTI

Kiran enters quarterfinals of Korea Masters

IKSAN CITY, 7 NOV

India's Kiran George dished out yet another gritty performance to upset third seed Chi Yu Jen of Chinese Taipei in a tough three-game match and progress to the men's singles quarterfinals of the Korea Masters badminton tournament here on Thursday. The 24-year-old Indian overcame his Chinese Taipei opponent, ranked 31 in the world, 21-17 19-21 21-17 in a second-round match that lasted one hour and 15 minutes. World number 44 George will play fifth seed Takuma Obayashi of Japan in the last-eight round. Earlier also, George had to dig deep to defeat Vietnam's Kuan Kuo 15-21 21-12 21-15 in the opening round of the BWF Super 300 tournament.George, the lone Indian shuttler competing in the tournament, started brightly and always had his nose ahead of his Chinese Taipei rival in the opening game to eventually take the lead.—*PTI*

PHOTO: PTI

Breaker Gunn retires after Olympics controversy

SYDNEY, 7 NOV

Australian breaker Rachael Gunn has told a Sydney radio station that she plans to retire from competition just three months after her unconventional routine at the Paris Olympics led to her being ridiculed and spawned conspiracy theories about how she qualified for the Games. The now 37-year-old Sydney university lecturer failed to get on the scoreboard in all three of her competition rounds in August, with a routine that included unorthodox moves such as a kangaroo hop. Gunn had initially planned to keep competing but said the experience had been so "upsetting" that she changed her mind.—*PTI*

Arsenal's loss to Inter: Arteta slams penalty calls

ILAN, 7 NOV

Arsenal coach Mikel Arteta said a 1-0 loss to Inter Milan in the Champions League on Wednesday was "very, very difficult to accept" after two penalty decisions went against his team. The only goal of the game came just before halftime after Inter was awarded a penalty when a free kick into the area skimmed off Mehdi Taremi and onto Mikel Merino's outstretched arm, and Hakan Çalhanoğlu converted from the spot. Merino had a penalty appeal of his own rejected earlier in the match after being checked by the video assistant referee when he appeared to be punched in the head by Inter goalkeeper Yann Sommer as they both went for a cross.—*PTI*

Wright was ideal India coach: Sandeep Patil

MUMBAI, 7 NOV

The 1983 World Cup winner and ex-chairman of selectors, Sandeep Patil feels John Wright's approach of giving a free hand to players led to his successful coaching stint with India, something his more authoritarian successors Greg and Kumble failed to emulate. In his autobiography Beyond Boundaries launched here on Wednesday, Patil gave deep insights in his book about the reason behind Wright's success as India coach vis a vis Chappell and Kumble. Patil was privy to several developments of the tumultuous Chappell era.—*PTI*

Jurel shines, Rahul fails as India A flounder bounce test

The host ended the day at 53 for two in 17.1 overs

MELBOURNE, 7 NOV

A dogged knock of 80 from wicket-keeper batter Dhruv Jurel and a wicket apiece from Mukesh Kumar and Khaleel Ahmed helped India A fightback against Australia A on Day 1 of the second unofficial Test in Melbourne on Thursday.

Skipper Nathan McSweeney looked comfortable against the opening burst of the India A pacers before poking at a Mukesh delivery outside off, nicking behind. Cameron Bancroft played out 21 balls before pulling a short-length delivery straight to the short square-leg fielder.

The host ended the day at 53 for two in 17.1 overs when rain brought proceedings to an early close with Marcus Harris remaining unbeaten on 26 with Sam Konstas giving him company. Earlier, India A found itself in huge trouble inside the first 16 balls of the day after being put into bat on a lively pitch that had both swing and seam on offer for the quicks. Michael Neser immediately struck, removing opener Abhimanyu Easwaran and Sai Sudharsan off successive deliveries in the first over. Neser was inches away from his hat-trick as visiting captain Ruturaj Gaikwad almost chopped the ball onto the stumps. However, Gaikwad couldn't make most of his luck as Neser eventually got him out in the next over at slips. In between, KL Rahul, sent in to open the innings, got off the mark with a four down the ground but Scott Boland found the outside edge, sending him back after a four-ball outing. Punching gloves with the score reading 11/4, Dhruv Jurel and Devdutt Padikkal brought the chaos under some control with a 53-run stand for the fifth wicket. While there were several plays and misses, the partnership also saw some glorious drives from the duo.

Padikkal fell close to Lunch for 26 and Jurel found a partner in Nitish Kumar Reddy to keep the scoreboard ticking. However, a poor shot selection had Reddy caught after scoring 16, off Beau Webster, who took two more in quick succession to reduce the visitor to 119/8.

Australia A 54 for 2 trail India A 162 (Jurel 80, Neser 4-27, Webster 3-19) by 108 runs.
—*PTI*

Dhruv Jurel and KL Rahul PHOTO: PTI

Extra bounce will find them out: Chappell

Former Australia Test captain Ian Chappell believes if the Indian batters try to go over the top with their shots in the upcoming Border-Gavaskar Trophy series, then they will be found out by extra bounce in the conditions during the all-important series. India will reach the Australian shores after a disappointing 3-0 series defeat to New Zealand at home. The poor form of captain Rohit Sharma and talismanic batter Virat Kohli are among the visitors' main concerns. "India has got some batting problems. —PTI

1ST T20I

Samson and Abhishek will be hoping for a breakaway series PHOTO: PTI

India's second-line stars look for a breakaway series

DURBAN, 7 NOV

As India firmly embraces a transition phase, a clutch of second-line stars such as Sanju Samson and Abhishek Sharma will be hoping for a breakaway series in the four T20Is against South Africa, starting with the first contest here Friday.

They must shed the tag of sidekicks and establish themselves as the first-choice players in this format.

The recent home T20I series against Bangladesh was a precursor. Samson received a chance to open consistently against the neighbors, and he made the most of it slamming a 47-ball 111. In the post-Rohit Sharma era in T20Is, Samson would like to further buttress his claim for a regular opening slot with a few fruitful outings against the Proteas. This is an important series for Abhishek as well. But his other six international innings have produced – 0, 10, 14, 16, 15, 4. Abhishek will be keen to be more consistent to safeguard his place, and he will also be looking to be more penetrative with his left-arm spin. Tilak offers a similar case. The left-hander has somewhat fallen off the radar after making a solid beginning to his T20I career against the West Indies in August 2023. The match starts at 8.30 pm IST. —*PTI*

WBBL Team: Kaur features in 50-player shortlist

MELBOURNE, 6 JUNE

- Harmanpreet Kaur is the lone entry from India in the 50-player shortlist

Captain Harmanpreet Kaur is the lone entry from India in the 50-player shortlist for the Women's Big Bash League (WBBL) Team of the Decade, which was released on Thursday.

The shortlist comprises cricketers who have played a minimum of 60 WBBL matches before this season.

The list will be pruned to 12 by a selection panel of experts after taking into account public voting. Public voting on the Big Bash App will open between 11-24

The Team of the Decade will honor the greatest players from across the 10-year history of the WBBL. Cricket Australia Director Clea Smith is chairing the selection panel, which also includes Mel Jones, Lisa Sthalekar, Matthew Mott, Quentin Hull, Laura Jolly, and Alistair Dobson.

Public voting will be given equal importance and the panel will then review and combine those votes with their own selections to finalise the 12-player side, to be announced at the WBBL 10 final on 1 December. The final XI will have a maximum of three overseas players in keeping with the league's rules.
—*PTI*

Captain Harmanpreet Kaur

ISL 2024-25

B'luru lock horns with NorthEast United

BENGALURU, 7 NOV

Two formidable sides will face each other to present the fans with a fantastic opportunity to witness an engaging battle when Bengaluru FC hosts NorthEast United FC in the 2024-25 season of the Indian Super League (ISL) at the Sree Kanteerava Stadium here on Friday.

Sitting atop the points table, Bengaluru FC has garnered 16 points from seven games with the help of five victories and a draw. Their six-game-long unbeaten streak of the current season was snapped when they faced a crushing 3-0 defeat to FC Goa in their previous fixture. Regardless of that setback, the Gerard Zaragoza-coached side has showcased sublime cohesion in all departments – strengthening the hopes of their followers that they will bounce back stronger in the coming game.

However, their challenge will be complicated by NorthEast United FC, who won 3-2 against Odisha FC in their last game. The Highlanders have struck 17 goals – the highest in the league thus far, and notched three wins and two draws in their seven encounters to accumulate 11 points and claim sixth place in the standings currently.

Bengaluru FC have emerged victorious in each of their last four home matches, keeping clean sheets in all of those games. If they do not concede a goal in the next match, it will be just the third instance of a side keeping five or more consecutive clean sheets at home in the competition's history after FC Goa (6 clean sheets between November 2014 and October 2015) and Bengaluru FC themselves (5 clean sheets between February and November 2019). Their defensive solidity, especially in their backyard, makes them a tough nut to crack for the visiting units. —*PTI*

Bengaluru FC to take on NorthEast United FC today PHOTO: PTI

- Two formidable sides will face each other to present the fans with a fantastic opportunity to witness an engaging battle when Bengaluru FC hosts NorthEast United FC in the 2024-25 season of the Indian Super League (ISL) at the Sree Kanteerava Stadium here on Friday.

Jamal Musiala gets Bayern Munich back on Champions League track

RIYADH, 7 NOV

A second-half Jamal Musiala goal got Bayern Munich back on track in the Champions League with a 1-0 home win over Benfica on Wednesday. Struggling in Europe after back-to-back losses left them outside the knockout places, Musiala broke through the stubborn Benfica defense, heading in a Harry Kane assist. Bayern were dominant in possession but carved out few clear-cut chances, lacking fluency in front of a silent home crowd who refused to sing out of respect for a hospitalized fan.

Despite the win, Bayern still have work to do in Europe, with this season's Champions League final on home soil.

The German giants sit 17th, one behind Dinamo Zagreb who they beat 9-2 in their opener. Bayern face French champions Paris Saint-Germain next in the competition.

"We had good moments. The opponent defended well. It was very important to get three points today," Musiala said after the match.

"We don't have to win every game by four or five goals. Sometimes 1-0 is enough. We had to be patient. Now we carry on and look to the next game."
—*AP*

Bayern's Jamal Musiala celebrates after scoring the opening goal PHOTO: @FCBAYERN

Group C: Manohar's unbeaten fifty keeps Karnataka afloat against Bengal

BENGALURU, 6 JUNE

Abhinav Manohar made a determined unbeaten fifty to rescue Karnataka after a top-order collapse, taking the hosts to 155 for five against Bengal after the second day's play of their Ranji Trophy Group C match here on Thursday.

Manohar made 50 off 73 balls (6x4, 1x6) and added 58 runs for the unbroken sixth wicket stand with Shreyas Gopal (23 batting) as Karnataka recovered from a wobbly 97 for five.

Karnataka still trails by 146 runs.

Bengal, resuming from overnight 249 for five, could not progress much and got bowled out for 301.

Pacer Vasuki Koushik (5/38) and leg-spinner Shreyas (3/87) combined to pluck the remaining five Bengal wickets for 52 runs.

But that joy was short-lived as Bengal bowlers Suraj Sindhu Jaiswal (2/53) and R Vivek (2/44) rocked the Karnataka top-order with regular strikes.

The home side lost their most experienced batters – captain Mayank Agarwal (17) and Manish Pandey (0) – in the space of six balls.

Abhinav Manohar PHOTO: PTI

Agarwal was cleaned up by Jaiswal while Pandey's two-ball innings was snapped by Vivek.

However, Karnataka found some fight through Manohar, a white ball specialist, and Shreyas, who returned to the stateside after spending last season with Kerala, as they negated 18 overs to keep their side afloat.

Brief scores: In Bengaluru: Bengal 301 all out in 101.5 overs (Anustup Majumdar 101, Sudip Chatterjee 55, Shahbaz Ahmed 55; Vasuki Kaushik 5/38; Shreyas Gopal 3/87) vs Karnataka: 155/5 in 51 overs (Abhinav Manohar 50 batting, Shreyas Gopal 23 batting; Suraj Jaiswal 2/53, R Vivek 2/44). Karnataka trail by 146 runs.
—*PTI*

ATP FINALS

Sinner, Alcaraz in separate groups, Djokovic out

TURIN, 7 NOV

Jannik Sinner and Carlos Alcaraz were placed in different groups for the ATP Finals in Thursday's draw. The earliest they could meet in the semi-finals.

The Ilie Nastase Group features Sinner, Daniil Medvedev, Taylor Fritz, and Alex de Minaur. The John Newcombe Group features Alcaraz, Alexander Zverev, Casper Ruud, and Andrey Rublev. The big name missing is that of defending champion Novak Djokovic, who withdrew on Tuesday due to an unspecified injury.

23 years since Djokovic, Federer, and Nadal missed the finals not since 2001 has the finals been held without at least one of Djokovic, Roger Federer, or Rafael Nadal. This season also was the first since 2002 without at least one Grand Slam title for a member of that trio.

Djokovic has won the ATP Finals a record seven times. He beat Sinner for the title last year.

jannik Sinner and Carlos Alcaraz are poised to add another entry into their rapidly developing rivalry when the ATP Finals open Sunday without any members of the Big Three for the first time in nearly a quarter century. The top-ranked Sinner and No. 3 Alcaraz evenly split the year's Grand Slam titles between them with two apiece and it would be fitting if the pair meet again in Turin.

And since Alcaraz was overtaken by Alexander Zverev in the rankings this week, the Spaniard could be placed in the same round-robin group as Sinner. The draw for the eight-man event is scheduled for later Thursday.

After the round-robin stage, the top two finishers in each group advance to the semifinals.

The other qualifiers are Zverev, Daniil Medvedev, Taylor Fritz, Casper Ruud, Alex de Minaur, and Andrey Rublev. The big name missing is that of defending champion Novak Djokovic, who withdrew on Tuesday due to an unspecified injury.
—*PTI*

Barcelona's Cubarsi gets 10 stitches after a kick to the face

NEW DELHI, 6 JUNE

Barcelona defender Pau Cubarsi is "fine" after requiring 10 stitches to close a cut on his face, manager Hansi Flick says.

The Spaniard, 17, was forced off in the 67th minute of Barcelona's 5-2 Champions League win against Red Star Belgrade on Wednesday after being caught by Uros Spajic's studs as he headed a corner clear.

Cubarsi, who made his debut for the club at the age of 16, needed medical attention on the pitch before his substitution after being left with a bloodied face and an open wound.

Flick said after the victory: "He needed stitches, but he's fine."

The club later posted a photo of a smiling Cubarsi with the caption: "I'm OK." —*PTI*

Barcelona defender Pau Cubarsi PHOTO: @PAUCUBARSI

- Barcelona defender Pau Cubarsi is "fine" after requiring 10 stitches to close a cut on his face, manager Hansi Flick says.